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WHAT HAPPENED AT WASHINGTON?

WHAT exactly have Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. Ernest Bevin achieved in the discussions at Washington? First and foremost, they have scotched some very dangerous notions, prevalent in Washington until a few weeks ago. Mr. Snyder after all did not brandish any of the big sticks which some British Conservatives, as well as Wall Street, have been thrusting into his hand. Prompted no doubt by the Canadians, he appears to have recognised at last that our difficulties form part of a wider world problem of dollar shortage, and cannot be remedied by unilateral action on the part of Socialist Britain. The attempt to force us into the gamble of unilateral sterling devaluation, which was launched by the American Treasury last May, has been called off, and so has the frontal attack on full employment and the Welfare State. This is the fair side of the medal—a genuine if negative victory for Sir Stafford—and it lies upwards for all to see.

The reverse side has yet to be revealed; the official communiqué gives the vaguest description of it. But it looks as though steps must have been taken to check the immediate dollar drain—or why did Sir Stafford commit himself to such optimistic comments? Those steps include a resumption of stock piling, some advance purchases of sterling materials by the Canadians, possibly a speeding of E.C.A. payments to Britain and, also, possibly, some quick loan. Taken together, these measures could ease the immediate drain, but they do nothing to cure the long-run disequilibrium. So, too, the right to use E.C.A. dollars for buying Canadian wheat will be even more welcome to the Canadians than to ourselves; but it is no cure because it does not find us any more dollars.

The long-run measures, indeed, are left so vague that it is impossible to tell if anything has been achieved or even attempted. We can welcome the recognition by the American Administration that a high tariff is inconsistent with the position of a creditor country. But does Congress share this view and will the American business man accept it when it affects his own business? Does even Mr. Truman realise that far more is called for than the continuance of the reciprocal agreements policy? Again, large American investments in Europe and the colonial areas could obviously help to redress the dollar balance. But will American investors lay out their money on terms consistent with the continued freedom of the recipient countries to shape their own economic policies? Moreover, should American investment flow chiefly towards Germany, will it not create more problems than it solves by intensifying competition in the export market between an ultra free enterprise Germany and Socialist Britain? Relaxation of American requirements about the use of synthetic rubber should be helpful; but the clause about oil, with its reference to "protection of the legitimate interests of the major producing countries *and companies*" is both vague and disquieting, in view of the attitude of the powerful American oil interests.

Although the long-term problems have hardly been touched by the Conference, this does not mean that it was waste of time. The main objects of Sir Stafford and the Foreign Secretary were to restore confidence in sterling and win time. In both they were successful. But the time they have won must be wisely used. This means that at long last the Government must face the basic issue of Britain's status in the post-war world. Is English-Speaking Union the goal and does Mr. Bevin envisage a special relationship between Britain and the U.S.A. which sets us apart from the other peoples of Europe? If so, are the gigantic defence costs, which that special relationship must involve, compatible with the maintenance of the Welfare State? Alternatively, do we see our future as a partner in a new political union, including Western Europe and the Commonwealth, or is such a conception reconcilable with Socialism and full employment? The economic crisis will continue to be dealt with on a makeshift basis and Britain will drift uneasily from one crisis into another, unless at long last these political questions are squarely faced and answered.

Senators at Play

The U.S. Senate, this week, has been talking tariffs, and shouting hard to make its voice heard above the voices of the Washington negotiators. Such Senate debates are always largely given over to speeches in which each senator endeavours to show his devotion to the sectional interests forming the strongest pressure groups within his own State. The acute sectionalism of American opinion about economic policy comes out at its most vivid on such occasions. Speaker after speaker simply assumes that the importation of anything his own constituents can produce ought to be prevented by a tariff—non-discriminating, of course—high enough to keep out competitive foreign goods, quite irrespective of the general welfare of the United States or of the balance of payments between the United States and the rest of the world. Thus, Senator Thomas of Oklahoma has been gunning against oil imports; Senator Butler has been urging that grain, instead of being stored for export, should be fed to American cattle; and other Senators have been demanding measures to keep out Danish butter, Swiss watches, and anything else that E.C.A. is simultaneously urging European countries to send more of to the United States. In themselves, these field-days of parochialism and vested interest need not be taken too seriously. The more ridiculous proposals will not pass; indeed, they are not meant to pass. But what they are meant to do, and in fact largely achieve, is to create a climate of Con-

gressional discussion that effectively rules out any major liberalisation of American economic policy in relation to world trade. For as long as this attitude persists—and the American Constitution helps it to persist—the dollar problem will remain insoluble except by the gradual building up of a world trading area wide enough to do without most dollar supplies. That will be a bad solution, from the standpoint of Europe especially; but unless the Americans change their line speedily, there seems to be no other.

Russian Trade

The failure so far to reach agreement with the Soviet Union on a general trade treaty has fortunately not blocked the contract for a million tons of coarse grains, though the contract was initialled months ago and published only when the trade talks as a whole reached a stalemate. The Russians are well aware of Britain's need for grain supplies from outside the dollar area, and undoubtedly used this as a bargaining counter in the negotiations for a larger trade agreement. When these failed to make much progress, both sides were willing to close a limited deal—Russia to get a good price before the world grain market felt the pressure of this year's surpluses and Britain to ensure that imports of feeding stuffs were at least maintained at last year's level without fresh dollar outlay. The larger trade agreement seems to be hanging fire for two reasons. First the restrictions placed upon British exports to the Soviet Union by the American blacklist, which includes many of the goods Russia is most anxious to buy and, secondly, by the comparatively high cost and distant delivery dates of British products upon which there are no strategic restrictions. While the cold war continues, little can be done about the first of these obstacles, and the second is part of the general problem of costs and productivity which is plaguing Britain in a sellers' market. It may, therefore, be hard to reach a general agreement with the Russians. But the value of Russian primary products to the British economy makes perseverance worth while.

The Railway Dilemma

It is still too soon to say how the railway workers mean to take their rebuff at the hands of the tribunal. Their leaders, pledged in advance to accept the verdict, are evidently minded to play for time, by prosecuting their case with the London Transport, Docks and Inland Waterways, and Hotels and Restaurants Executives in the hope of gaining some concessions there, and then pressing the main Railway Executive to make a renewed offer. But will their constituents wait while this not very hopeful line is being pursued, or will the "work-to-rule" movement, which has already begun at Warrington and is threatened on the London Tubes, spread irresistibly, whatever the Union leaders may say? Even if it does spread, there is a possibility that it will be limited to a demonstration of protest, for a week or for some other named time, rather than continued indefinitely. Such a letting off of steam would be a nuisance, but not a calamity, especially if the effect was to make the railwaymen feel better after it. But the public must not forget either that the railwaymen have a real grievance or that this is most difficult to put right without very awkward repercussions. There is a strong case for raising the wages of the lower-paid workers in the traffic grades: indeed, the Railway Executive made an offer on this point before the case went to the tribunal. If, however, this were done, it would be difficult not to extend the increase to the lower-paid shopmen; and, were it so extended, the already narrow margin between these workers and the skilled engineers in the railway shops would be reduced, and demands would follow for an increase to them. Such a demand would spread at once to the main body of skilled engineering craftsmen, who are already claiming that the skilled margin ought to be raised; and that would mean before long a general campaign for higher wages all round. All this lies behind the clash of attitudes between the Trade Unions which has from the first complicated the railway dispute.

To Invade Albania ?

The Greek Government has now admitted, what many outside Greece have for some time suspected, that it is thinking of turning the civil war in Greece into an international war. Mr. Sophocles Venizelos, deputy Prime Minister, told a B.B.C. correspondent last week that his Government had "seriously considered sending its army into Albania" in pursuit of Communist guerillas, but had "deferred to the counsels of moderation of Great Britain and the United States." That the pursuit of the guerillas would be rather an excuse than the real reason for the invasion of Albania is suggested by the passionate revival in the Athens press of irredentist claims on "North Epirus." Mr. Venizelos went on to explain that the Greek delegates to the United Nations Assembly this month will ask for the Assembly's condemnation of "Albanian intervention," will demand "assurances" that this intervention should cease, and will try to persuade the Assembly to appoint a special commission to that end. Athens is hoping, he explained, that this commission may be accompanied by "an international force to enter Albania to supervise the frontier." This is another way of saying that British and American troops are also to be asked to fight for "North Epirus." Athens is unlikely to attain its purpose by this simple and aggressive formula, but there is evidence to suggest that London and Washington may be at least sympathetic towards action in Albania. The founding in Paris of a "Free Albanian Committee," which includes such nationalist stalwarts as Midhat Frasheri and Abas Kupi, prompts the thought that what the State Department and the Foreign Office are now after is not so much the partitioning of Albania between Greece and Yugoslavia—hence the "counsels of moderation" to Athens—as a change of regime in Albania which would bring that country into the western orbit. It was perhaps with possibilities of this sort in mind that Marshal Bulganin, speaking in Sofia a week ago, assured his audience that the Soviet Union is ready to support Bulgaria "in every way, whatever trials should come your way."

Are the Guerillas Beaten ?

While Athens is busy blowing on the fuses of the Balkan powder keg, its army is counting up the gains and losses of the fighting for Grammos and Vitsi. The outstanding fact, in spite of the Greek Army's relatively great success, is that most of the guerillas seem again to have escaped elimination. The Greek General Staff claims that about 8,000 of them "crossed into Albania." The Bulgarians add that they have interned over 800 who crossed their frontiers and the Albanians 270; many of these, presumably, were casualties and non-combatants. Five thousand guerillas, according to Athens, remain in Greece. Whether or not the missing 8,000 went into Albania or, as their own reports say, broke out towards the South, they can be counted upon to go into action again as soon as possible. Hence the perceptible uneasiness in Athens that the war may not after all be over, and the determination—notwithstanding the successes in Grammos and Vitsi—to embroil Albania. This uneasiness is all the more remarkable in view of the terrific concentration of fire-power aimed at the guerillas. "Everything to kill and burn was poured on the guerillas," according to a correspondent of the *Sunday Chronicle*, who adds that new British and American weapons were also given their baptism of fire. These deplorable events are no occasions for British pride. They emphasise, on the contrary, the need to bring this dreadful war to an end by the only means likely to prove rapid and effective—the intervention of the United Nations, not in Albania but in Greece.

The Bogus Republic

The "Federal Republic of Germany," finally inaugurated this week with the election of Theodor Heuss as its first President, is at last a political reality. Exactly what it means, however, is not so easy to say. Its birth was attended by a bargaining and bickering about seats and places which are in the worst but most authentic tradition of German parliamentarianism. The resemblance with Weimar, indeed, is as close as it is disturbing. The election of Karl Arnold, Left-wing Christian Democrat, to Speaker of the upper house, and of Erich Köhler, Right-wing Christian Democrat, to Speaker of the lower, as well as that of Heuss himself to the post of President, were preceded by bitter and somewhat breathless intrigue between "groups," "tendencies," and parties. Adenauer wanted Ehard—his more reactionary colleague from the Bavarian Christian Socialist party, to be Speaker of the upper house, but was forced by the less reactionary members of his party, combined with the Social-Democrats, to accept Arnold. Schumacher allowed himself to be nominated as candidate for President—against Heuss—as a "protest" against Adenauer's uncompromising Right-wing Government-in-prospect. It is hard to have confidence in the democratic effectiveness of this West German Assembly, composed as it is largely of those whom Hitler defeated at the parliamentary game or who sided openly with Hitler. The most that can be said is that the grim truth about western Germany to-day—that the social forces which gave rise to Hitler are again strong and confident, and that to combat them something more powerful is needed than the present thin veil of parliamentary decency.

Japan's Come-back

The future of Japan comes early on the Agenda of the talks between Mr. Bevin and Mr. Dean Acheson. There is a close parallel between the post-war position in Germany and Japan. In both cases the economy has now been restored to a point which raises the question of competitive exports. The Americans in Japan are as anxious as they are in Germany to build up the country's trade, to reduce the cost of occupation to the American taxpayer and to build solid foundations for an anti-Communist regime. In Japan, as in Germany, the old reactionaries and pro-Fascists have crept back into key positions in politics and industry. General MacArthur recently made two highly optimistic and doubtful statements; safeguards, he said, had been established against the re-emergence of autocracy as the prevailing philosophy of government—a euphemism for Fascism—and "the threat of Communism as a major issue in Japanese life was dead." But the desirability of building up Japanese economy, of relaxing post-war controls, including the occupation itself, presents different problems to these two Ministers; Mr. Bevin has to consider his relations with the Commonwealth; face problems of reviving Japanese competition in India and

South-East Asia; and he may not share the General's optimism about democracy in Japan. Further, the future of Japan should be discussed by the Far Eastern Commission where other Powers, such as Australia, may also wish to have their say about both economics and strategy.

Boer Supremacy

Dr. Malan has again demonstrated that his Government will stop at nothing to enforce its odious racial policies and to make South Africa a model of pitiless White Supremacy. *Apartheid*, or segregation, is now to be applied to the universities which, until now, have admitted a few score of Africans on more or less equal terms. It is no secret that the Nationalists are determined to deny the African access to any genuine education, just as they have taken away the limited franchise of the coloured people of the Cape. They intend, moreover, to introduce a national registration scheme in addition to the existing pass laws, to make sure that everyone is neatly docketed by race. So the process goes on, to the disgust of all who possess any decency. The scandalous living conditions of the Africans will deteriorate; they will continue to be arrested on trumpery charges and farmed out as cheap convict labour; and every effort will be made to prevent them from making common cause with the Indian minority, another target of Dr. Malan's oppressive policies. Since he has also declared war upon Communism, no doubt every attempt to defend the rights of Africans and Indians, let alone to organise them for any constructive end, will be denounced as subversive and suitable and savage penalties devised. It is no wonder that British immigrants are not being welcomed in South Africa, or that many people of British extraction—who are by no means opponents of limited discrimination—are finding the Malan regime intolerable. A terrible picture of present conditions in South Africa is drawn by Miss Monica Whately in her detailed and factual report of a recent visit (published by the Union of Democratic Control, 32, Victoria Street, S.W.1.)

A Very Odd Case

To us there would seem nothing surprising in a young man demonstrating at a Fascist meeting in Dalston and calling out: "We fought the war to stop this kind of thing." A few years ago the remark would have been a commonplace; indeed, there would have been ground for suspicion against anyone who did not hold that one of the objects of the war was to combat Fascism and anti-Semitism. In 1949, however, this remark was quoted against the young man when he was arrested and brought before Mr. Malone in the North London court. Mr. Malone is reported to have asked: "What fighting the defendant had seen," and, on being told he had served in an R.A.F. ground crew asked, according to newspaper reports, "Do you call that fighting?" and sentenced him to six weeks imprisonment. After he had been informed, however, that the defendant had served in air crews, he recalled him and reduced his sentence to a fine of £5! This change of mind will no doubt gratify the 800,000 personnel who served in R.A.F. ground crews during the war, and who would be surprised to hear, whether they were actually "airborne" or not, that they were not fighting. Some 15,000 of them were casualties. More important, however, than Mr. Malone's views on the Air Force, is his strange tariff of sentences. If to have flown mitigates an offence for which a mechanic gets six weeks, what would be the sentence for a mere citizen of Dalston, who worked in a factory during the blitz?

WHAT THE TRADE UNIONS HAVE TO DO

THE Prime Minister, in his address to the Trades Union Congress, categorically repudiated wage-cuts as a means to reducing costs, and pleaded for the attainment of higher competitive efficiency by other measures. The spokesmen of the General Council and of most of the leading Unions in effect said the same thing, the Electrical Trades Union almost alone upholding the thesis that British industry could well be made to pay higher wages out of its surplus profits, even without any increase in productivity. But of the nature of these other methods there was, from the beginning to the end of the Congress debates, hardly a hint. Mr. Bryn Roberts, of the National Union of Public Employees, did try to get the General Council instructed to draw up detailed plans for higher production at lower costs; but Mr. Tewson rejected his proposal as impracticable, and it was duly voted down. As it proved, the Congress, at the word of its leaders, contented itself with a renewed endorsement of the policy of "restraint" in respect of wage demands and with a series of entirely unspecific exhortations to its membership to do all they could to improve efficiency. The only positive contribution was an instruction to the General Council to consider means of raising managerial standards, including the training of Trade Unionists in management techniques.

This, alas, is not nearly enough. There is urgent need for better management and for a better understanding of managerial problems among Trade Unionists, both in order to make trade union policies more realistic and to widen the field of recruitment for the higher posts. But such measures, even apart from the fact that their effects are bound to be slow, cannot possibly achieve what is needed unless they are accompanied by a radical change in the attitude to production of the main body of industrial workers. It is nonsense to pretend that British output is too low, and British costs too high, simply because managers are inefficient or employers restrictive instead of venturesome. A considerable part of the reasons for unduly high cost lies in the obsolescence of much of the plant, including buildings as well as machinery, with which industries have at present to make do; but it is also undeniable that, even in face of this handicap, output could in many cases be much higher if the workers really regarded it as their responsibility to make it so. There is, for example, simply no excuse for the present low level (even though it is not quite so low as it was) in house-building: nor is there any doubt that in many manufacturing industries output could be raised quite considerably if the workers could be re-assured that, in supporting technical improvements, they would not be undermining their own powers and jeopardising their prospects of employment and their hardly won craft standards.

From the craftsman's standpoint this lesson of the need for a changed attitude towards production is in many cases the harder to learn because of the narrowing, or even the disappearance, of the rewards for superior skill. The policy, of raising the wages of the worst paid workers to a tolerable living minimum has inevitably, in face of the need to keep the total wages-bill under control, narrowed the margin between skilled and unskilled wage-rates. Nor does the extension of payments by results by any means always help to give the more skilled man his chance; for quite often it is the less skilled man who can most easily increase his individual output, whereas the more highly skilled man is on work that cannot be speeded up, or is a time-worker on a maintenance job in which he can increase other people's output, but not, visibly or measurably, his own.

The Prime Minister was right in general in saying that "there is a danger that when a justifiable advance in wages for an underpaid section of the workers has been granted it results in demands from those who have enjoyed higher wages to maintain the same differential"; but, in arguing that "this is bad economics and bad social morality" was he not going much too far? If we are to improve our industrial efficiency we must make it worth the while of workers who are capable of skilled work to acquire the necessary skill, often at the cost of much lower earnings during their apprenticeship. The case for greater social equality must not be allowed to destroy this indispensable incentive: quite the wrong way of setting about re-distribution of the national income is to reduce the working classes within each industry to a dead equality while leaving both wide differences between industry and industry and between the working classes as a whole and the middle and upper classes.

To press this point is by no means to argue that past differentials ought to be preserved intact; either within industries or between them. It is a part of our present difficulty that we are forced to "freeze" a wage-system which rests on no rational basis, and has not even the sanction of long usage behind it. The present wage-relativities are largely accidental, and the outcome of quite recent shifts in relative bargaining power; but it is impracticable to attempt that general re-distribution which is often called for under the name of a "national wage policy" without much more room for manoeuvre than the existing situation allows. All that can be done at present apart from meeting here and there particular claims which rest either on an exceptionally strong foundation of social justice or on a plain need to attract additional recruits into an occupation that is badly undermanned, is to seek ways of linking higher earnings to higher output and, where necessary, of regrading labour within particular industries with this object in view.

The question of a "new wage structure" has already come under consideration in several big industries—notably coal-mining, cotton and engineering. In all these cases the obstacles are proving formidable, mainly because it is not easy to alter the internal wage-structure of an industry without adding considerably to its total wages-bill, but also because proposals for a new structure usually involve, as in the cotton industry, an extensive revision of trade union practices and hit up hard against cherished craft traditions. This explains the refusal of the General Council and of Congress to accept the responsibility for translating their advocacy of higher efficiency into precise and detailed terms; for such acceptance would involve telling the individual Unions what to do in matters which vary widely from industry to industry and are regarded by each body of workers as peculiarly its own concern. The refusal would be justifiable on these grounds were there any sign that the individual Unions, in dealing with the problem, were at all conscious of its urgency, or of the sheer impossibility of maintaining the British standard of living unless it is courageously faced. There is, however, no sign of this: rather is it clear that the Union executives are afraid of their members and the members most unlikely to be shaken out of their traditional attitudes unless and until they are given an unequivocal lead. Thus, the position reached is one of stalemate—of general exhortations that are

valueless because no one need take them as applying to his own case, and of dumb resistances that utterly obstruct the drastic changes that are indispensable if British industry is to hold its own in a world dominated by mass-production techniques based on the huge home-market of the United States.

What, then, is to be done? There must be men in the Trade Unions who are aware of what is needed, and courageous enough to say so if they could speak together, so as to give one another mutual support. If the General Council will not do this, such men must do it for themselves, seeking the support of their own colleagues in their several Unions, and undeterred by the fear, which is largely unreal, of giving the Communists a handle for denouncing them as the betrayers of their class. Communist stock stands very low to-day, and would stand lower still was not the lead given by the General Council so uninspiringly negative. The General Council has shown its ability, in its attitude on the wages issue, to face unpleasant facts and even to admit the impracticability of some of the palliatives with which it had hoped to sweeten the pill of "restraint." What it has not done is to admit that "restraint" is no remedy for a general economic situation that is going from bad to worse, or to offer to its constituents a legitimate basis for hoping that the crisis will be overcome.

This missing voice would say to the workers: "Never mind if profits are high—leave that to the tax-gatherer, but insist, if you will, on statutory control of dividends and compulsory use of surplus profits for the re-equipment of industry, which will help you to attain to higher production, and therewith to a better and better assured standard of living. Put every ounce of energy you possess into playing your part in increasing production, even in face of obstruction from reluctant employers or managers; for, the more you do this, the stronger will be your claim to the workers' control you claim as your due. Do not be deterred from doing these things by fear of unemployment; for in truth your hope of escaping unemployment lies in making it possible to go on buying the raw materials without which you will find no work to do. Do not be deterred, either, by fear of a coming Tory reaction: you will be stronger and not weaker for facing it in proportion as Britain's world situation is better. Get down, in each industry, to the job of devising a structure that will remove every hindrance to higher efficiency; for that is the only way of preventing cost-cutting from taking the form of wage-reductions. Finally, don't kid yourselves that surplus profits can be used to raise wages without higher production, when every penny of them is needed for capital development in the interests of higher output without excessive strain on yourselves." If these things were said, and were made specific in relation to each branch of industry, can it be doubted that the workers would respond, if not at once, as soon as there had been time for the plain truth to sink into their minds.

"Our skill," said the Prime Minister, "is as high as, or higher than, that of any other nation, and our labour is as productive." The first of these things is true: the second, alas, is not. That may be much less the workers' fault than other people's; but, whether or no, to make the second statement as true as the first is now the only possible means of preventing a disastrous fall in the British standard of living.

KREIS WEILHEIM

We crossed the frontier from Tyrol into Bavaria a few days after the German elections. I had read the reports about the revival of Bavarian Nazism and was anxious to investigate. During the fortnight we were there, however, I never met Herr Loritz or any of the Munich politicians. I wanted to get below the level of politicians. So I lived in Weilheim and had a look at the Kreis of which it is the centre.

Weilheim is a rather uninteresting small town on the road which leads across the upper Bavarian plain from Munich to Garmisch at the foot of the Alps. On one side, a stretch of the old town wall still survives, and there is a fine market square with two fountains and a baroque church; on the other, are the railway station, the saw mills and a few small engineering and textile factories. The Kreis is almost entirely agricultural, though it contains the coal-mining village of Peissenberg, the first of a string of five pits which follow the only seam in Bavaria.

The first impression is of a miraculous recovery since currency reform took place last summer. With the mark at 14 to the £, prices are not much higher than here, if you subtract food subsidies on the one hand and purchase tax on the other. Meat on the ration costs 2/6 a pound and on the free market 4/6; butter 3/6, rationed, and 6/- unrationed; cheese, which is not rationed, 3/4, tomatoes 6d. and potatoes 1½d. You can get a fairly decent pair of men's shoes for £2 15s. and a poor quality suit for £18 10s. Our pleasant hotel room, with running cold water (hot water is out of the question) cost 12/- a night for the two of us, and gave us an excellent lunch, with far more meat than any English restaurant, followed by vast quantities of *Apfel-strudel*, for 4/6. Beer has now returned to pre-war strength and quality, and there seems to be an unlimited supply of rich cakes with whipped cream, though a tea party of this sort comes to 5/6 a head.

But the impression of prosperity is superficial. In Kreis Weilheim there are 19,000 persons registered for employment. Of these, despite the harvest, 1,814 were on the dole when I was there and a further 3,600 on relief. In the town itself, 16 per cent were unemployed. Relief for a married couple comes to 17/3 a week with 5/9 for each child. In addition, a large section of the population, which is not eligible for relief, is living on or below the public assistance level. I visited one old Socialist bombed out from Wuerzburg, and living with his wife in a single room. A 1914 war pensioner, he is lucky to have 12/- a week for everything when the rent is paid. He is typical of countless elderly people who lost their homes in the war and their last savings in the currency reform.

Compared with them, the man with a job feels relatively well-off. But his wages are pitiably low: the *average* wage is sufficient to buy one pair of shoes. The skilled engineer gets £3 9s. for a 45-hour week. In the saw mill the gross wage is £3 7s. 6d. and in the clothing factories £1 16s. In all cases, one-fifth has to be deducted for taxes, social insurance, etc. Rents are low, since they are frozen at the 1936 level. With housing accommodation strictly rationed to one sleeping room and living room (or kitchen) per married couple, and one extra room for each member of the family over 16, the worker has no ambition except for food and drink. Here the miner, as in Britain, is the aristocrat. His wages are higher, his rooms have not been requisitioned, he has a factory canteen and at home he eats meat and drinks beer most days of the week. What of the upper classes? All of them are subject to the rationing of "house space." Even the brewer and the leather merchant, the richest men in town, live in two rooms and the rest of the house is requisitioned. Currency reform cost them their savings; they are very heavily taxed and desperately short of capital for expansion. But they are all doing pretty well, now that the Black Market has been replaced by a free market and stable currency and the Trade Unions are scared by unemployment from putting in wage claims. The real sufferers, as in 1923, are the retired rentiers—they live in destitution—and the underpaid Civil Servants. Riches in Weilheim to-day consist not in what you have in the bank but in the assets you possess—land or a factory—which under the new free enterprise economy of Frankfurt can be expected to produce handsome profits in the future.

The life and politics of Weilheim—like those of countless small towns—are dominated by the refugee problem. The pre-war population of the Kreis was 38,000; it has been swollen to 87,000. This increase does not include the 500 odd D.P.s who enjoy extra-territorial status and live either in the best hotels or in requisitioned houses. The new population is made up of war-time evacuees, from Berlin for instance, who never went home and refugees from the East. In Bavaria, these latter are almost exclusively Sudeten-Germans.

When we talk about the revival of Nazism it is important to understand the social conditions in which it is reviving. Imagine that Britain had been smashed by the Axis, and that within five weeks of our military collapse—while the country was under occupation by Germany, Italy and Japan and effectively prevented from achieving any economic recovery—the Japanese had removed the whole populations of Australia and New Zealand, dumped them in these islands and told us that we had the sole responsibility for assimilating them. I suspect there would be a few nationalist tensions, especially if every household were compelled to surrender rooms to the newcomers, every wage earner feared they would take his job and every taxpayer had to foot a gigantic bill for public assistance, quite apart from the occupation costs (which average 27 per cent of the budget in the American Zone and rise to 65 per cent in the French).

The mere housing of these 8,000,000 refugees (and thousands are still coming in every week) has involved an outstanding feat of organisation. German bureaucracy was always efficient. But it is difficult to imagine the problems involved in working out the "house-rationing" and relief work necessary to maintain them. It is not surprising that all this has left deep social scars on a people already indoctrinated with Nazism.

One example of the politics of refugees is the cattle-market of Weilheim. Long after the chief wave of refugees had arrived, the Czechs decided to turn out the Sudeten-German anti-Fascists as well. Three hundred of them—Socialists, who had opposed Hitler in the 1938 elections—arrived at Weilheim, eighteen months ago. Since there was no other space for them, they were housed in the cattle-market and there I saw how each family had constructed a tiny home using blankets as walls. The place was so spotless that the misery was almost concealed. Exceptionally, the Bavarian Government decided to build houses to meet this crisis, 68 houses to be exact. Now the battle rages who shall have them. The Catholic Landrat says they should go to people who work in Weilheim; the refugees in the cattle-market may have priority, but, if they have not jobs in Weilheim and cannot

afford to pay the rent, they cannot have the houses. The Socialist deputy burgomaster says that the Landrat is afraid of the voting strength of the "Red quarter" he would be creating; and accuses him of giving preference to Catholics. Herr Loritz's supporters say that this is all the fault of the Western Powers for consenting at Yalta to the expulsion of the Germans; their policy is to recover Breslau and send the refugees back home. This is the real stuff of German politics to-day.

On top of the refugees are the D.P.s. The best hotel in the market place is still occupied by Polish Jews. On the first day I was there a huge American car drove up; an American sergeant got out and unloaded on the street quantities of PX goods. After some haggling over the price, they were taken into the hotel. This was all done perfectly publicly; and the German police could not intervene owing to the extra-territorial status of D.P.s. That evening I was taken out to a cafe on a little hill outside the town where the respectable burghers go to drink a glass of beer and watch their daughters dance. The café was virtually empty but on one side sat two American Military Policemen of the Highway Patrol, their revolvers lying on the table, with a mixed party of Jewish D.P.s. They were drinking brandy by the mugful and their dancing was a little uncertain. It is the Military Police who are supposed to clean up the black market.

Two days later, I went to visit the Jews in their hotel. Time after time I tried to turn the conversation to Bavaria and their relations with the Germans. But they would have none of it and we argued for an hour about Jabotinsky and Revisionism. They were not merely physically extra-territorial but spiritually as well, a fragment of Israel in a foreign country. The black market for them was merely the obvious way of getting funds for the national struggle. As for the Germans, they treat them as objects, not human beings. Who can blame them for that?

When I left Weilheim I was no longer surprised that "democratic reorientation," which the American governor told me was his main task to-day, has not been completely effective. Men's politics come not out of text-books, but out of the conditions in which they live. Western democracy to the average Weilheimer means American Military Government running the black market with Jewish D.P.s; means millions of destitute refugees quartered on nearly destitute Germans; means a currency reform imposed by Britain and America which has made the rich richer and taken away from the poor the pittance they had left.

What really amazed and touched me was that, despite all this, the local Socialists retained their faith in Labour Britain. I was the first Englishman they had seen for twelve years. I spent some sixteen hours in week-end schools and evening discussions, explaining the housing programme, the health service, nationalisation and our own dollar problems. The extent of the good will was only equalled by the absence of information. "Why has the steel nationalisation collapsed?" was the first question asked me by the Chairman. Reading only the American-controlled local press with its daily stream of vilification, abuse and ridicule of Labour Britain, many of them were convinced that British workers were starving and British Socialism in ruins. Hearing of our achievements, some of them literally cried with relief and forgot for the moment about dismantling. What is really surprising in Germany to-day is not that nationalism is reviving, but that, despite everything we have done and not done, Social Democracy survives.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

THE removal of Sir Bernard Paget from Ashridge, just at the moment when he had, at least temporarily, resolved the College's financial problems, is something much more important than a domestic fracas in the Conservative Party. It was, of course, something of an anomaly that a foundation established in memory of Bonar Law for training Conservatives should have been placed under a non-political educational council and transformed into a genuinely non-party centre for adult education. That it happened was partly due to the vision of Arthur Bryant, one of the few Conservatives who became a successful W.E.A. lecturer, and partly to the bluff and independent policy of its first director. Sir Bernard had been converted to the importance of political education when he was Commander-in-Chief Home Forces during the war. He realised that A.B.C.A. was essential to the training of the citizen-soldier, and, admitting to himself that its success was largely due to its adoption of W.E.A. ideals and methods, he saw no reason why in peace-time such adult education should remain the monopoly of the working-class movement. He attracted to Ashridge students of all sorts but chiefly young professional and middle-class people who felt out of place in the W.E.A. Many Socialists at first were sceptical of Ashridge, remembering where the money came from and that Lord Davidson was ultimately in control. But those who went to see for themselves, came away converted. In embryo, this was the genuine thing because the Director and his staff were determined that it should be.

* * *

Lord Davidson, Mr. Bryant and Sir Bernard have between them disclosed enough to enable one to form a good idea of what the row was really about. In 1940, a House of Citizenship was started in London with the worthy intention of giving debs social education. But for some time the Governors have been at loggerheads with the Principal, Miss Rolph; they recently ended her contract. Lord Davidson decided to install her at Ashridge, without a word, it seems, either to Mr. Bryant's Educational Council or to Sir Bernard. Lord Davidson must have known that to install her meant ousting Sir Bernard. The most charitable explanation is that he sincerely disapproved of using Conservative funds for non-party purposes. I cannot help a certain ironic amusement at the treatment of this dispute in the popular press. Imagine that Hugh Dalton had worked successfully to remove Lionel Elvin from his position as Principal of Ruskin because the College was not faithfully serving Socialist ends. What denunciations of totalitarianism we should have heard!

* * *

The conspiracy trials in Hungary are likely to be as politically significant as the Czech Communist *coup* of February, 1948. The first trial is intended to remove Mr. Rajk, and his close associates. He had been one of the Big Four of Hungary; and no one but a trusted Communist could have been first the Foreign Minister and then Minister in charge of home security. He is now himself accused of being a police spy ever since he was gaoled by Horthy in 1933. The prosecution will take the indictment conveniently to Belgrade where Rajk is accused of intriguing against Hungary with Western Embassies in liaison with Tito. His trial is to be geared to Tito just as the great purges in the Soviet Union were centred round Trotsky. Rajk, it will be noticed, like Tito was a tough, loyal, militant member of the inner Comintern cadre whose job it was to fight in Spain and later, during the war, in his own country's underground. The Soviet leaders seem never to forget or forgive faithful service.

* * *

Another group of arrested people included some who were released from refugee camps after the Spanish war and others whose crime appears to be that they served the Communist cause in foreign lands. It is suggested that they were only able to return to Hungary so quickly because they were agents of imperialistic Governments against which they had been fighting. It is certainly possible that these fighters for the Third International did include some spies. A third group of former Social Democrats is even more significant. It even includes Paul Ignotus, Press Attaché at the Hungarian Embassy in London. It includes other Social Democrats who had decided that the only way to work for their country's future was to work with the Communist Party. Right-wing Socialists who refused to be allies of the Communists and who are now completely powerless, are still permitted to live quietly in political retirement. The arrest of the Left-wing Socialists who have worked with the Communists marks a new stage. A year ago, when I was last in Budapest, a reasonable degree of political liberty was maintained. Hungary was a freer country than it had been under Horthy. Talk of a Peoples' Democracy was not ironic. Since then the theory and practice have both changed. The days of tolerance and collaboration between parties are over. Hungary has become avowedly a dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship is apparently to be founded on blood.

* * *

Reading Professor J. B. S. Haldane on the Lysenko business is exactly like listening to a Catholic convert seeking reasons to uphold doctrines which he formerly ridiculed. He is embarrassed by being unable to discard his habitual process of thought. The Catholic would be wise to say something like this: "My reason tells me that this is rubbish. I have now learned to doubt my reason and to rely on Authority and Revelation. There are some things I cannot understand. I believe them because they are part of a whole system which I now accept." If Haldane made a similar statement about Lysenko, he would be invulnerable, though no longer a scientist in Western terms. That he is clearly unwilling to do, and so, as John Langdon-Davies shows in his little book *Russia Puts the Clock Back* (Gollancz, 7/6) he has recourse to evasions, far-fetched analogies and fallacious argument which must make Haldane, the unconverted Rationalist, squirm in his professorial chair. Analysing his broadcast argument, Langdon-Davies does just the kind of job that Haldane himself would have loved to do in the past in debunking an elusive and waffly thinker. It would have been easier for Haldane if he had not, in 1932, said:

> The test of the devotion of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to science will, I think, come when the accumulation of the results of human genetics, demonstrating what I believe to be the fact of innate human inequality, becomes important.

Since saying this he has joined the Party, and, because Lysenko lives in Russia, he must now have at least an open mind about claims that in the past he would have scorned. And apart from the question whether Lysenko is scientifically right—on which I venture no opinion—he never faces the question whether it can be good morals or good sense or even good Marxism to denounce Mendelism as "Fascist" and allow the followers of one sect to oust—and apparently in some cases to hound to death—other geneticists.

The Scots, who have a "guid conceit o' themselves" are never tired of blowing their own bagpipes; recently they have plenty to blow about. Edinburgh has shown the world what Scotland can do for the Arts, and now, at the Scottish Industries' Exhibition, it is Glasgow's turn to prove that Scotland can make things beautiful as well as serviceable. Indeed it is sincerely said by visitors to Glasgow—not only by Scotsmen—that this is the most attractive trade show ever put on. Nothing could show the skill of the Scottish salesmen more than the news that one firm has sold twenty-four sets of bagpipes to the U.S. Marine Corps. It is an old English custom to tell it to the Marines—it takes the Scots to sell it to them.

* * *

Many Russians, I'm told, manage to laugh at the absurdities of Party decrees about "homeless Cosmopolites," Lysenko, and so on. Each such decree has, in recent years, produced its own "folklore" in the U.S.S.R.—its little crop of clandestine, but nevertheless irrespressible and widely circulated jokes. This, I hear, is one of the latest concerning the battle of genetics, and the rival principles of "heredity" and "environment." "Now, take an example. Suppost Comrade Ivanov's wife has a baby, and the baby looks like Comrade Ivanov, that would be a demonstration of the Mendelian principle of heredity. But if the baby looks like Comrade Petrov, the next-door neighbour, then it's a triumph for Comrade Lysenko's principle of environment. See?"

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry nd 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

The magistrate, Mr. Harley, said he thought it proper that at times a man should beat his wife, and the Bible supported that statement; but beating must be done as a service of love, not in temper. Accused should have used a reasonably sized stick. It was a pity he lost his temper and used an iron bar.—*Daily Telegraph.* (B. Phillips.)

An article or short story suitable for *New Writing* is unlikely to appeal to the readers of *Good Taste.*—*Writer's and Artist's Year Book.* (Andrew Pears.)

Blackpool Council, after deciding to paint notices on three low bridges to warn bus drivers, asked British Railways for permission. British Railways agreed—provided the usual advertising rents were paid.—*Daily Graphic.* (A. R. Brown.)

Those odd people of our time who refuse to bow their heads at the sound of Jesu's name, but reverently raise their hat when mention is made of Mr. Kingsley Martin, and read the *New Statesman* with a respect that is withheld from the *New Testament*, excite little hope in me that they will ever find the Promised Land.—St. John Ervine reported in *Daily Telegraph.* (Anthony Kiely.)

One incident caused some dismay to the speakers. Two young Communists who had been selling *Challenge* outside the Exchange, joined the crowd, and one of them asked a perfectly legitimate question in a quiet and orderly manner. A man standing in the front, who had been threatening violence to the speakers all afternoon, turned and shouted at him.

The police immediately moved into the crowd, not to arrest the speaker, or the man who had shouted, as might have been expected. but the Communist questioner.—*Peace News.* (J. Taylor.)

NO REPLY

"... The reason why many people object to the holiday flight abroad of Cabinet Ministers is that these are the very persons who have forced upon this island a regime which makes a holiday here a mockery—little food, drink only at high prices, and no one to answer the bell." (Letter from Evan Jack, of Barnston Old Rectory, Dunmow, in the *Spectator*, August 26th.).

The old man laid down a good cellar,
His butler looked after it well—
And after himself, till he left us
With no-one to answer the bell.

Dunkirk did us out of both footmen;
The housemaid and parlourmaid fell
For a brace of American pilots:
There's no-one to answer the bell.

Our cook made the lightest of soufflés
The cares of this life to dispel:
Now she works at an egg-packing centre
And there's no-one to answer the bell.

These treasures grow dim in our memory
As Attlee drags England to hell:
The tradesmen leave stuff on the doorstep—
There's no-one to answer the bell.

With only one man in the garden
There is only the local hotel
Or starvation . . .Why, even when We ring
There's no-one to answer the bell.

We did try a local girl daily,
But these days you never can tell:
She couldn't decant, and she told us
To answer our own bloody bell.

No, that's not the bell-ringers' practice;
The sexton is tolling a knell.
There must be a death in the village:
I wonder, for whom tolls the bell?

TOM DRIBERG

THE EAGLE AND THE FLEA

THE weevil has got into the atomic stockpile. It is poor consolation to be able to boast of massed quantities of bombs ten, a hundred or a thousand times more powerful than those which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki when somewhere, perhaps not even in a militarily powerful country, there is a single test-tube loaded with weapons more powerful than the whole atomic armoury. In short, biological warfare can mean, Dr. Brock Chisholm, director-general of the World Health Organisation, told the World Union of Peace Organisations, at St. Cergue, Switzerland, that the atomic bomb is child's play and large armies, navies and air forces obsolete.

Dr. Chisholm spoke of one substance so potent that seven ounces of it could quantitatively be sufficient to wipe out most of the human race, and of another which could wipe out a whole community in six hours and disappear without trace so that an occupying force could safely occupy the area within twelve hours. As he said, it is not profitable to discuss the details of biological warfare because no one, not even the Secret Services of the great Powers, could possibly know the whole facts. Somewhere someone may have discovered Substance X. It need not be one of the great antagonists. Man-power is irrelevant; heavy industry has nothing to do with it. Industrial potential has little to do with the production of deadly bacterials.

That explains why there is practically no discussion of biological warfare. That is why, among other things, the U.S. report on biological warfare—the so-called Merck Report—reticent though it was, was withdrawn from circulation. It is difficult to persuade people that they are secure behind the Maginot Line of the atomic stockpile, if at the same time you disclose that a sub-microscopic virus, dispensing with parachutes and panzers, can cross that line unseen

The strategy of a biological war cannot exist. For instance, it is a safe guess that a virulent strain of tularaemia was in the secret reserve armoury of the last war. Tularaemia is the American rabbit disease, which is practically unknown to doctors outside the United States, since they never see clinical evidence of it. It is fatal to humans—an ideal weapon against an ignorant enemy! But not quite ideal because once it revealed itself, he could culture it and retaliate. Therefore the only really safe way to use such a weapon is to inoculate your own population before you do. Inoculating 130,000,000 people is something which makes itself plain to the most obtuse intelligence officer. So the enemy would know in advance and that would defeat the object. Another thing, pestilence knows no frontiers, does not recognise uniforms according to the Rules of War and does not even respect neutrality.

Biological warfare, however, is not confined to bacteria or viruses. There are also body-chemicals, or hormones. It is salutary to watch the action of the selective weedkillers. There is one which selects weeds, like coltsfoot, in a field of grain and destroys them. The action is horrifying if you realise its significance. You can almost see the plants writhing and contorting in a travesty of the normal growth processes. An analogy in Man would be acromegaly, a disturbance of the hormones of the pituitary gland which produces "elephantine" growths in the extremities, hands, feet, chin and skull which caricatures the victim until mercifully death supervenes. That now commonplace weedkiller, spread on a tenth of the cereal fields of Britain this year, was, or a counterpart was (I believe), classified in the wartime secret lists as "Double Thirteen." A new variant is useful for selectively destroying woody weeds, like bracken. There are others, probably many more, which could be used to destroy growing foodstuffs. That could be serious enough in war, but it is more than conceivable that they have their human analogues.

One would also be entitled to classify as biological warfare the effects of the atomic bomb, at radiation, as distinct from blast or flash, range and of the radioactive gases which are a by-product of atomic production. So in one sense biological warfare has already been used and "legitimised" by the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Remember that these bombs were unleashed without any real knowledge of the biological effects and that the U.S. has a permanent mission in Japan watching for they-know-not-what. We had a glimpse of the possibilities at the British Association where we were shown what radiation could do to the heredity of rats—offspring born albino, and not just blind, but without eyes at all so that the face is a blank mask, and unable to be weaned because the bone-growing gene is destroyed and teeth cannot grow. There were many variants—the embryo destroyed in the womb, the parents sterilised by effects on the gonads, but not immediately, so that for an interval they are fertile and pass on the sinister genes to the next generation inducing sterility or semi-sterility in them or even passing on what Professor Muller calls "the death-gene" to later generations. And so on.

There you have the appalling progression of war. Once you killed your adversary in straight fight. Then you visited the enemy's "crimes" upon his entire generation. Now you visit these "crimes" on the unborn even unto the third and fourth and maybe fifth and sixth generations. All offspring of an atomic-bombed community will be more rigorously race-segregated than any Negroes, for The Master Race could never risk contamina-

tion by the evil genes of its creation.

Then there is another "biological" aspect of the atomic-bomb brought out at St. Cergue, in the discussions on atomic energy; the bomb may make the ground radioactive by transmuting the elements of the soil. If there were cobalt present it might make the area an un-enterable desert for a thousand years. We already know that the warships which were used in the Bikini bomb-tests and which were intended to be used again in the deep-water-tests had to be sunk because they could never be manned. The metal was still hopelessly radioactive after three years.

One more war, Dr. (latterly Major-General) Brock Chisholm told the peace organisations, may kill 90 per cent of the human race. Never before, he said, has the human race found itself in this position which is comparable only with what happened when the Ice Age engulfed a large part of the world and required a degree of adjustment of their habits which many of the organisms were unable to make. Man is now in that position. He may or may not survive; it depends entirely on his ability to change his behaviour patterns.

In this situation, the behaviour patterns of our ancestors avail us nothing. All our ancestors, including our own parents, have been wrong and if we persist in their habits and their prejudices, they will destroy mankind. That was Dr. Brock Chisholm's admonition: all our values and assumptions, political and religious are in question and have to be re-examined. The world is changing so fast that the world citizen must be freely adaptable. Yet we place our lives and the lives of hundreds of millions in the hands of national delegates without any specific training or knowledge in the affairs in which they are supposed to deal. In terms of the present needs, they are not only untrained but immature.

Dr. Chisholm defined "maturity." It is not just a matter of acquired experience. It is a changing and expanding value. A hundred and fifty years ago, when time and distance were different, a person could be mature in isolation, but to-day he has to have the capacity of living in harmony with all kinds of people everywhere. A mature person (rarely under 35 to 40) must be able to function mentally at least two generations ahead of his time; to assume goodness in the intentions of others until he discovers evil and even then to be tolerant; and to have an undifferentiated loyalty to the whole human family. The last is a new demand of maturity because in the past people could have this kind of loyalty to their family, their community or their nation, without extending it to the rest of the world. He said:

> The trouble to-day is that the world is beginning to behave as though such people were available. The U.N. presents that hope but until mature statesmen are available, it cannot fulfil its destiny. As long as people come to U.N. concerned with their petty prestige, importance and profit, or with those of their little nations, they can only worsen instead of bettering the perilous plight of mankind.
>
> Even when such highly civilised and mature people are available, and know what their attitude ought to be, they cannot state that attitude because they will not be supported by their national governments and are under instruction of their State Departments and Foreign Offices.

How can we convince those immature minds that war is obsolete—politically, because it is no answer to ideologies, militarily because it is now strategically unmanageable and unpredictable? When the Lion, the Eagle and the Bear are humbled and the Flea becomes the king of the beasts, staff talks need a Mowgli as an interpreter.

RITCHIE CALDER

RE-PLANNING IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

THE utter silliness of the idea that "it's all done by forced labour" is shown very conclusively by the result of the Czech Two Year Plan. For one of the main worries of the planners in 1948 was that wages were rising too fast in relation to production; and, because the industrial workers were in a dominant position after the February revolution, they were able to secure rises in sectional wage rates in some industries out of line with the plan priorities. This is a problem which a country with full employment and a strong trade union organisation must inevitably encounter if it tries to plan production, and exactly the same problem as now confronts the Czech planners would arise in Britain, if we tried to plan production for higher productivity, as they are doing. The interest of the Czech planning experience lies in the fact that the economic situation is very like our own.

At the end of 1948, both the psychological and the economic situation seemed out of hand. The Two Year Plan, which ended in December, had aimed at a 10 per cent rise in the living standard for the whole population. Although the industrial target—a 10 per cent increase over pre-war production—was achieved, the rise in the general living standard was not, mainly because of the catastrophic harvest failure in 1947. Bread shortage was avoided by imports of grain from the Soviet Union, but heavy slaughtering of cattle cut meat, milk and fat supplies by nearly half. The abnormal food imports from Russia—about 650,000 tons of wheat and coarse grain—were paid for by increased exports of manufactures. This meant a general shortage of consumer goods. The very tight and efficient rationing system seemed in danger of breaking down, as black-market dealings spread and "black" prices rose. Whereas in Poland every new bridge or tractor or locomotive meant more supplies, in Czechoslovakia the increase in industrial output seemed to bring no tangible results, only one shortage after another.

This was partly bad luck, but also partly bad management. The Two Year Plan began with the economy half-socialised; the main industries were nationalised, but wholesale and export trade and the building industry were still in private hands. This did not work: private employers paid wages over the official rates to attract workers (there is no direction of labour). Nationalised industries followed suit; the managers were under strong pressure from the workers to raise wages, and paid "black" rates and "soft" premiums, since it was the way to reach plan targets. The result was that money wages tended to rise faster than production, and productivity in industry did not rise over pre-war. It was this excess of purchasing power, in the hands of private enterprise and of the wage earners, which swept the shops bare last Christmas. It then looked as if the Government was faced by the equally unpleasant alternatives of giving up rationing or reducing wages. How could a Communist Government in a Socialist economy face that situation?

The solution was an ingenious policy of disinflation—the double-price system, coupled with a heavy purchase tax. There are now two prices for food and most consumption goods. The food-rationing system, at low controlled prices around the British level, and with high preferential rations for heavy workers, was maintained, but food is also on free sale in State shops at fixed prices 5 or 10 times the ration price—butter at £1 per lb., meat at 10/-, coffee at £3 per lb. Textiles, shoes and soap are available on points at low controlled prices to the working population and their families, meaning industrial workers, smaller farmers, students, writers, artists and musicians in their syndicates. Others in the middle class, larger farmers, independent artisans, must buy these goods in the free market at high prices—a pair of leather shoes on points costs £1 10s., in the free market £15. The object was to draw off the currency hoards held by the "capitalist remnants," without reducing the purchasing power of wages. The proceeds of the general tax on the high-priced free sale goods are used to reduce the currency circulation, and are to be also the chief means of financing investment under the Five Year Plan. The black market has been killed, and as the note circulation has been reduced since the beginning of the year, controlled prices are coming down. Higher-paid workers—miners with £10 per week, and other heavy industry workers—can and do buy in the free market, which is in fact necessary to make their higher earnings real incentives. The professional middle class, of course, has suffered, though there are still evidently "capitalist remnants" with money to spend. There is no longer any inflationary pressure.

But the experience of 1948 showed the Czech planners that the big increase in productivity which is needed by the Five Year Plan would necessitate a complete overhaul of the planning mechanism. They decided, first, to reorganise the management of the nationalised industries. Up to the beginning of this year, these were run by administrative boards, composed of representatives of workers, managers and the Government, like our own. They did not work, because they met rarely, had no clear responsibility for day-to-day decisions, but could be used by the managers to take the blame for inefficiency. Now they have been scrapped, and the managers have complete control over all questions of industrial organisation, and are directly responsible to the Ministry of Industry. Next, the Planning Office is working out the key financial plan of control, on the Soviet model, which means that each industry is allotted a budget, fixing its total expenses, including wages, in each year. This will enforce a stricter control of costs, and of wages through the allocation of a "wages fund." It will also stabilise the currency, which is regarded as an essential to complete planning. Under the Five Year Plan, wages are to rise in relation to productivity: what the workers get out of the plan is what they put into it.

This means, of course, that the function of the Trades Union is to change completely. Now, their main job is to be the mobilisation of labour to achieve the Five Year Plan, and to prepare "counter-plans" to raise productivity and economise labour. This is an idea which is hard to put over, precisely because the Czech labour movement was strongly organised against exploitation before the war, and under the occupation was geared to sabotage. Since 1945, the position of the industrial workers has improved enormously in relation to the middle class: they are better fed, better socially served, have the pick of the famous holiday resorts. But after the Trade Union movement had made the February revolution, the workers did expect an immediate rise in real wages, which could not then occur, though some politicians had led them to believe that it would. Zapotocky, from the first, has never shrunk from telling the unpopular truth, and to-day is genuinely popular. If the Czech Communists lack a streamlined super-planner like Gerö or Minc, they have what is at the moment more important, the real thing in labour leaders

The food situation is getting much better: the harvest is expected to be above the pre-war average. Collective farming is not being pushed directly, and cannot be as yet; by Bulgarian standards, most of the Czech land is farmed by Kulaks, for the Czech peasants are commercial small farmers rather than subsistence farmers of the Balkan type. There are only about forty co-operative farms, formed by taking over big properties under the land reform laws. Most of the land expropriated from Czech and Slovak farmers under the 1948 reform is being retained as State farms, intended to be the model for better farming, and these work on plan targets like the factories, with goose girls and pig maids striving for their norms. The approach to collective farming is through the unified market co-operatives (in fact, Government purchasing agencies) with which each farmer has to make a more or less voluntary contract for food deliveries, and through the machine tractor stations which will expand to mechanise all farms by 1953. There is not much class war as yet in the countryside, and the big harvest will remove the danger of more peasant hoarding.

As compared with last summer, the economic situation is better and the psychological atmosphere reflects it: it is far clearer and cleaner than a year ago. The successful achievement of the Five Year Plan targets up to now shows the results: industrial output is now 10 per cent higher than in 1948. Production goods industries are now producing 34 per cent more than in 1937, while the consumption goods industries are still 10 per cent below pre-war. That, of course, is what the Five Year Plan means—a shift from the old light industries, relying on Western markets, to the supplying of capital goods to the other East European countries; and that is why a "new mind," as well as a new mechanism, is necessary to carry the plan through. It means a choice between stability with a slowly rising standard, and a quicker rise with the risk of unemployment. No one expects that this mental change will come quickly and easily, but it is certainly beginning.

Prague, September. DOREEN WARRINER

SO THEY SAY . . .

Making the Best of It

Daily Express, September 7:

> A loss of £4,700,000 in 1948 . . . is reported to-day by the British Transport Commission . . . but for a change in accountancy methods . . . the loss might have been nearly £11,000,000 . . .

Daily Graphic, September 7:

> . . . had the full sum been charged [for depreciation] and placed to reserve, the building up of which is required by the Transport Act, the year's losses would have totalled more than £18,000,000 . . .

Daily Herald, September 7:

> Prophets of gloom who forecast that Britain's nationalised transport would crash into a debt as big as £30,000,000 are confronted by the British Transport Commission's first annual report . . .

Souvenir of Bridlington

Daily Herald, September 6:

> UNION CHIEFS BACKING UP LAWTHER
> "OUTLAW" CALL—CODE TO CHECK REBEL STRIKERS

Daily Graphic, September 6:

> T.U.C. WILL NOT OUTLAW "WILDCAT" STRIKES—LAWTHER APPEALS IN VAIN

A Question of Tempo

Daily Mail, September 2:

> Rafael Kubelik . . . last night confirmed that he had joined the rank of Czech notables who have declined to return to their Communist ruled homeland . . .

Manchester Guardian, September 2:

> Mr. Rafael Kubelik . . . said last night . . . that he had not authorised a statement . . . that he did not intend to return to Czechoslovakia after his present world tour . . . He added: . . . "I am fully booked up well into 1951, so the question of my early return home does not arise . . ."

Ringside Seats

News Chronicle, September 7:

> Dave Sands . . . battered Dick Turpin . . . into submission . . . [Turpin's] eyes glazed suddenly and his knees wobbled . . . . he rose groggy . . . sank slowly to his knees again . . shook his head in an effort to regain his wits and at the count of nine he made shift to stand up, but at ten he still had a knee on the canvas and was still clutching that rope . . .

Daily Telegraph, September 7:

> . . . Turpin knelt at the ready while the count was intoned over him. His eyes appeared to be clear and his faculties sound. He rose alertly on the count of ten which, of course, was too late, and Sands was awarded a dubious knockout . . .

Daily Express, September 7:

> Turpin will vouch that Sands is the hardest-hitting middle-weight in the world . . .

Daily Mail, September 7:

> When I asked [Turpin] who punched the harder, Sands or Marcel Cerdan . . . his unhesitating reply was, "Cerdan, without a doubt . . ."

Precognition ?

Evening News, September 5:

> HOUSE HIT BY LIGHTNING.
> SAME AGAIN TO-MORROW.
> AUTOLYCUS

ON PENGUIN ISLAND

Two penguins—quite young ones; flappers, you might say—were standing at the edge of the pool at Harmondsworth, discussing their future.

"My parents were most far-seeing," said one penguin, whose name was Margaret. "I can't be grateful enough to them. Right when I was born they put me down for Biography. Such a safe career, you know, and it does give one . . . I don't want to sound snobbish, but a certain *tone*, don't you think? Have you considered Biography, Beatrice?"

"Oh, I think I shall stick to Fiction, my dear," said the other. "They always said I was a Fiction type, at school. It does give one such a wide range, after all. Unemployment has been virtually banished in Fiction."

"You're quoting one of those speeches."

"Well, it's true. One never has any difficulty in being chosen."

"Ah," said Margaret, tossing her beak, "perhaps. But chosen by whom, that's the question?"

"As to that," said Beatrice, "far be it from me, you know, but I have heard of people who went in for Biography and never got chosen at all."

"People without connections. My father was chosen three times by André Maurois, don't forget that."

"And then," pursued Beatrice, "do you think that deep blue is quite your style, my dear? So quiet, you know. They say most of the girls in Biography wear no beakstick at all."

"One can look respectable without . . ." Margaret was saying, when two male penguins in bright green jackets rushed past them and plunged into the pool, splashing the young ladies with ink.

"Come in and have some fun, sister!" one of them shouted.

"Ignore them," said Margaret. "These Crime and Detection people are becoming insufferable. They behave as if they owned the island."

"I once knew a C. and D. fellow who was quite sweet," Beatrice said wistfully. "Only the best C. and D., of course. He was chosen six times by Agatha Christie."

But Margaret was looking at a stately old lady who was standing by herself in the shade.

"I'm sure she could tell a story if she liked."

"Oh, I know her," said Beatrice with strained casualness. "She was twenty-five years in Fiction—in the Lane, before the move out to the island. She knew all the best writers. She was chosen no fewer than eleven times by H. G. Wells."

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, and both her sons have made most distinguished careers. The elder one was always a brainy chap, practically a Pelican; he was chosen for Homer's Odyssey. He had a most unusual brown suit."

"Hm. Personally, I'd always like to be chosen by the author himself. I mean, one knows so little about Homer's tastes. What does the other son do?"

"Amusements and Puzzles."

"How very odd."

"It's most exclusive. They wear those yellow jackets—one doesn't see many of them."

They were now approached by two young penguins walking at a rapid jog-trot. Both were dressed in red and white, the man in a striped blazer, the girl in a New Look dress with broad stripes round the skirt.

"Pardon me," said the young man, "have you the right time?"

"First quarter to spring list," replied Beatrice, consulting her catalogue.

"Thank you so much. Come along, Betty, we mustn't stop."

And they hurried off.

"What a job! I should hate to be a Special," said Margaret.

"They do see life, though."

"For a time—but where does it get them? Worn out in a season, some of those girls. And do you know where they end up?"

"No—tell me."

"In the Charing Cross Road."

Both the girls giggled, but Beatrice soon recovered her gravity and said, "Margaret, you shouldn't talk about such things."

"And not only that," Margaret went on, "but some of them don't find customers even in the Charing Cross Road."

"My *dear!*"

They were joined by a lad of about their own age, who bowed deeply, stroked an incipient moustache, and said:

"*Je vous souhaite le bonjour, mesdemoiselles.*"

"Oh, Bert, you are silly!" exclaimed Beatrice.

"Albert, if you please."

"Al Bear, then. But how do you know you'll get into *Editions Penguin?*"

"What a question! With my training, who can doubt it? And my uncle was chosen by Anatole France—in translation, it's true, but that sort of thing tells. I have always known that I was born to be a two-and-sixpenny; if not a King, then an *Edition Penguin*. . . ."

But the two girls had walked away, bored, and into the clubroom, where they ordered two rum bodleys.

A girl they knew slightly was sitting listlessly in an armchair. She called to them weakly.

"Beatrice, darling, have you got an aspirin?"

"My dear, what *is* the matter?"

"They say you feel better after twenty-four hours. I've been illustrated."

MERVYN JONES

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Britain

. . . No, I think there is little chance of our meeting this year unless you can come over here. It is not that I do not want to visit America, for there is much I ought to do in New York, and I hunger for another sight of the Arizona desert; but I do not propose either to sponge on American friends for board and lodging and travel tickets or to go down on my knees at the Treasury or the Bank of England for permission to spend some of the dollars I earn. More than three years ago I wrote to the Treasury pointing out that if the currency restrictions were strictly enforced upon authors, the result would be that we should soon be earning fewer dollars and that, because we were writing less for America, the English point of view would soon be badly represented there. And this has happened. But the reply I received from the Treasury did not encourage me to pursue this line of argument. For my part I cannot see the sense of spending several millions a year on a British Council, whose task it is to spread British culture abroad, and yet at the same time to make it as difficult as possible for British authors to travel abroad. Nor do I see, particularly after reading that hospitality to government guests has been costing me, as a taxpayer, something like £18 a day, why I should be expected not to pay my whack in New York or anywhere else—and all out of my own money, mind you—just because some Treasury official or Bank of England clerk has decided that authors shall come into a lower grade than motor car manufacturers. And already my dollars earnings are dwindling because I am losing touch with America. Well, let 'em dwindle.

Your point about Dunne and determinism is sound enough on what I wrote you, but if you will take another look at his Serialism you will see that he went to most ingenious lengths to prove that freewill and precognition could be reconciled. I was discussing this the other night with a very distinguished physicist, who was asking me to refresh his memory of Dunne's theory, and who declared that he himself, unlike many physicists and mathematicians (notably Einstein, he told me), believed in freewill. After admitting that philosophically I was a duffer, I ventured to tell him that I thought that this Future, of which one sometimes caught a glimpse in dreams, was not something fixed, part of a vast relief map of events over which our consciousness, like a tiny point of light, was travelling, but a limited collection of possibilities, already shaped but not solidly fixed in material history, which, so to speak, actualised a certain number of these possibilities. So, when one caught a dream glimpse of the possibility that afterwards was actualised, the Dunne effect was achieved. (Don't tell me that this isn't clear. I know it isn't, but it is as clear as I propose to make it in this letter.) And he may have been merely polite or the excellent brandy we were sharing may have weakened his judgment—it was late and we were getting on nobly; one of those times when it looks as if the universe might yield up one of its major secrets—but he did say that what is happening in physics favoured these guesses of mine. But then I have always felt that the freewill-determinism dilemma was essentially a verbal one, one of those either/or, chop-logic traps. The worst way to discover any profound truth is to put Life into a witness box and then angrily cross-examine it ("Come, come, sir, give me a plain Yes or No"), like a barrister with a shaky case.

Did you know that I am a very difficult, cantankerous fellow? So runs the legend here. Its latest appearance, outside the newspapers, is in a volume of letters about the English, "A Small Stir," by two Scots—James Bridie (a dramatist of great distinction who has not been sufficiently appreciated on your side) and Moray McLaren. The latter says "Even J. B. Priestley used to be amiable . . ." some twenty-five years ago; for which he was rebuked by his more knowledgeable collaborator. The truth is that I am ten times more amiable now than I was twenty-five years ago, when I stalked about with all the withering arrogance of a young man with his way to make. I may be bumptious and aggressive now, but compared with that younger self I am Mr. Pickwick or Santa Claus. I am, in fact, much too amiable. I should be a better artist if I were less easy-going and good-natured, if I could discover in myself a harsher streak. I am not hard enough, never in proper training, for the higher slopes of art: not, that is, in this age, to which I do not really belong.

There is a kind of sour astringency, lit with a glitter of sadism, which has been in fashion for the last fifteen years, that is impossible for me even to imitate. Nearly all the most dazzling reputations in my time have been won by writers who hate life, despise their fellow creatures, and are chiefly inspired by their gall bladders. I do not say that many people enjoy their works, but then we have arrived at a time when enjoyment has apparently nothing to do with literary reputations. Genuine literature, as distinct from the fun and games of us mountebanks, is now something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Thus, at the universities, Eng. Lit. is now a kind of lemon tasting. Anything fat, full-blooded, lush, humorous, is barred; and contemporary geniuses and their critics seem to sit in a desert, gnawing a crust together and shaking the last drops from the water-bottle. Lecturers who cannot write at all praise only those authors who write as little as possible. E. M. Forster is a good novelist, but I suspect that it is by refusing to write novels that he has achieved his present reputation. Eliot is a genuine poet and a pleasant human being; but when at last he produces a new work, his admirers stand about like undertakers' mutes waiting for the coffin. In this hushed dry atmosphere of genuine literature, I look more than ever like a north-country comedian. Perhaps I feel like one; but an amiable one, mellowing rather beautifully.

But I will confess to you that I begin to boil and blaze when I read once again, as I did this very morning, the astonishingly smug and complacent observations of the scientist who has Doomsday in his pocket. "My friends and I," he says in effect, "have now invented something that will wipe out most of you in a few hours. You ought to start doing better, changing your behaviour patterns, with such dangerous things about the place." And nobody seems to notice how monstrous this is. But suppose we writers took this line. "We have now concocted some runes," we announce, "so powerful that they can easily bring agony and death to millions. We have placed these runes at the disposal of our respective governments, although we realise they are not fit to have them. So our advice to you people is to change your whole behaviour patterns as soon as possible, while there is still time." It is about ten to one that we should be lynched. But, you may reply, the case is different. Science must go on, and no individual is responsible for these nightmare inventions. To which I shall reply that science need not go on (and is clearly in some danger of blowing itself off the face of the earth), that science exists for the human race and not the human race for science; and that it might be found after careful enquiry that some individuals are in fact responsible for these hellish devices, that Professor Snooks was a great help to them last year, just as Dr. Bloggs is so busy with them this year. And while I agree that the rest of us should change our behaviour patterns, I also think it might be quicker and simpler if some scientists made a start by changing *their* behaviour patterns, which look much more sinister to me than my own does. Stand up, Professor Snooks! Come on to the platform, Dr. Bloggs!

Some random notes from my London life. . . . Every morning I have been looking at the "rushes" of a film in a large film-processing laboratory; and there I find myself, always to my amazement, in a tiny theatre fantastically got up to look like Ye Olde Inne, all plaster woodwork and painted tin beams, with the film-processing roaring and stinking all round it. . . . Once again I notice that audiences in West End theatres are not as quick-witted as provincial audiences. Perhaps life in very large cities, with all its noise and fatigue, now slows up people. . . . Hearing a chorus of women rehearsing a wild hymn to Bacchus, I tell myself that I ought to have remembered that the female voice in chorus sounds impregnably virtuous. These excellent singers might be Huddersfield school teachers celebrating the arrival of a new algebra textbook. . . . Am shown the proof of an article about some recent activities of mine, not written by a cub reporter but by a journalist who does special signed features; and although the facts could easily have been checked, almost every statement in this article is wrong. . . . Coventry Street in the evening represents everything I dislike in contemporary London, all the new Americanisation, the spivvery, the shoddy values, the empty faces. Central London badly needs some style and dignity. . . . But I begin to feel once more an affection for London in the smoky gold of these September mornings, when even here, so far from the fields, the woods, you realise that at last the long dusty summer has gone, and that the faint chill breath you savour even in taxis, passages from Stage Doors, saloon bars, is that of Autumn, so much more alive to me than High Summer and its meaningless blaze.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

(*From "The New Statesman" of September*, 1924.)

. . . Men still call themselves Socialists, probably in greater numbers than ever before. But now, when a man calls himself a Socialist, he conveys by the name little information about his ideas and beliefs. A few—very few perhaps—still cling to the simple State Socialist faith; far more, including nearly all the younger converts, regard the State and its works with an aloof and critical hostility. Socialism is still no doubt a faith; but it is, like the faith of some modern Churchmen, a faith that has discarded all its doctrines—a disembodied faith in the soul of a dead idea.

The Arts and Entertainment

THE SEVEN BANQUETS

One summer evening on the palace roof
In seven pavilions caged,
To entertain an ancient lonely king
Seven strange feasts were staged.

The first was queened by Silence; clocks stood still,
Mandolins lay unplucked,
While infants from the breasts of comely nurses
Luxuriously sucked.

Schoolboys in riot, hot with seasoned meat,
The second banquet lorded,
Shouted and wrestled in the gorgeous room
Which king and Time accorded.

Flowering lovers feasted in the third,
Hand intertwined with hand,
Their thoughts as one, spellbound by Her whose love
Unnumbered men outmanned.

Next were the rattling military, boastful,
Drunk on an even keel,
Investing the past with a scarlet gesture
And clink of formal steel.

Judges like Jupiters firm-lipped and paunchy
Sat before plates of gold,
Debated and sipped and sombrely, gravely
In legal orbits rolled.

Unhungry fading scholars watched the growth
Of shadows on the lawn,
Their grand climacteric's falling graph
On parchment faces drawn.

Great age was in the last; pain made some fretful,
Weakness made others weep,
Those who could laugh laughed softly; those who could hear
A string band lulled to sleep.

The king observed each feast, smiles on his lips
And eagles in his eyes,
But was not, when his guests had gone away,
Less lonely or more wise.

FERGUS ALLEN

THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL—III

THE Düsseldorf performances of *Faust* Part I were not only a worthy climax to the Edinburgh Festival on its dramatic side, but a revelation to English playgoers. To see Goethe's masterpiece worthily performed was in itself an excitement; what could hardly have been anticipated, at any rate by those unfamiliar with the German stage, was the vigour and clarity, the sheer impact, of the declamation. Intoxicating, spellbinding, this reliance on the power of the spoken word! "Im Anfang war das Wort": Faust, you remember, is disposed to question the pronouncement of the Fourth Gospel, but every German actor (to judge by this fine company) believes implicitly in the pre-eminence of words, and leans upon them for nine-tenths of his total effect. Rich, deep-chested vowels and trenchant, pithy consonants were projected into the theatre with an energy, a blend of intellectual and physical passion, which astounded and delighted the audience; sometimes the syllables were caressed, sometimes they flew forth as though from a catapult; never was the rhythm obscured. If only one could hear Shakespeare spoken like this! Almost the only English player who can be trusted, no matter how despotic or obscurantist the producer, to roll every syllable thus around the tongue, letting no jot of sound or sense escape, is Dame Edith Evans; and that is why I rate her worst performance higher than the best given by some of her colleagues. When great verse is spoken as Dame Edith and Gustaf Gründgens speak it, when each phrase and line is given the whole of its physical and poetical value, so that it rebounds from the back of the farthest gallery, and is positively *felt* to fill the auditorium with a fully comprehended music, then we experience one of the greatest pleasures of the theatre. This was again and again our sensation in Edinburgh; it happened when Herr Gründgens stood stock still, as Mephistopheles in Heaven, his restless eyes gleaming with eternal intelligence, and uttered the line: "Staub soll er fressen, und mit Lust"; it happened when Horst Caspar, in Faust's vaulted chamber, exclaimed in gigantic despair: "Welch Schauspiel! aber ach! ein Schauspiel nur!" Such moments of intense, harmonious pleasure are enough to make one cry, with Faust, "Verweile doch, du bist so schön."

Not having seen the play acted before, I cannot speak with confidence of its interpretation. But no spectator, even had he been unaware that Gründgens is Germany's greatest actor, could have missed the quality of this Mephistopheles. He seized upon every subtlety in Goethe's subtlest creation, and played the part with a kind of mocking aristocracy, the aristocracy of a fallen Archangel—more still, of a creature who belongs to "the Darkness that brought the Light to birth," and is therefore older and deeper than the upstart Sons of Light who complacently hymn the perfection of the Universe. This is the portrait which Herr Gründgens draws in his first scene, and never altogether loses, even in the most commonplace transactions of the Gretchen episode. Brilliant, above all, was the moment after Faust's great monologue "Erhab'ner Geist," when the tempter hung dead downwards from a rock, his inverted face close beside Faust's, the physical embodiment of denial.

Horst Caspar's Faust made, at any rate in the early scenes, a worthy partner. Perhaps he pitched the opening speech on too agonised a note, perhaps he missed the full lyrical calm of such passages as that beginning "O sähst du, voller Mondenschein"; but in the great invocations he was magnificent. Rejuvenation didn't altogether suit him, largely because he wore a ludicrous costume and an unfortunate rat-tailed wig which looked decidedly thin on the top (if I were to sign a pact with the Devil I should at least stipulate for a good thick head of hair!) The Gretchen of Antje Weisgerber lacked something in sheer innocence and pathos; but her "Meine Ruh' ist hin," was moving, and she brought off the final mad scene (though in a rather barn-storming way). The smaller parts were uniformly excellent.

It is probably unfair to judge the settings (Herta Böhm) or the technical details of the production (Gründgens) from a firstnight in a theatre doubtless very differently equipped from that of Düsseldorf; some scenes looked simple and impressive, others cumbrous or scrappy. But the essence of Goethe's conception was never distorted or betrayed.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

CHILDREN'S PAINTINGS

THE 272 pictures in the *Sunday Pictorial* National Exhibition of Children's Art, at the Royal Institute Galleries in Piccadilly, have been sifted from no fewer than 47,000 entries: comparing this with 14,000 for their first exhibition last year, one begins to find in the claim that this is "one of the significant events of the Art and Educational calendar" more substance than one might have expected.

The remarkable revolution that has come about in the last twenty years in the teaching of art in the schools is already historical fact, much written about. "We do not give children freedom for the sake of freedom, but for the self-discipline and self-realisation which it confers on the child," said Mr. Herbert Read at the opening ceremony. And "Children learn best when they learn unconsciously, and play rather than work. Through the arts the child discovers naturally his interest, concentration and imagination, and with these qualities he has a command of all fields of knowledge." And I should think this brief utterance crystallizes the conviction of the best art teachers everywhere. When one compares the energetic, gay results of present-day teaching in the schools with the almost meaningless exercises in ascetic observation which they have increasingly displaced one really is tempted, for once, to believe in progress.

However, freedom is relative, and elusive: and already one begins to see new restrictive canons emerging. The current conceptions of freedom—as it shows in child art—will have to be broadened yet again if certain natural desires and modes are not to be unconsciously suppressed by the teachers. For instance, we all now admire the swift, bold, dramatic, brightly coloured designs of which almost any child up to the age of ten is, it seems, naturally capable. Superficial aesthetic likeness to Matisse or Rouault has doubtless assisted this change in the general taste. But one result of the general approval which meets this kind of thing is the discouragement which it unwittingly bestows upon many dissimilar modes of expression. The prizes, the marks "highly commended" and "commended" seemed to me often misplaced at this show. Again and again the judges have ignored a work which I thought remarkable, presumably because they were dominated by this new prevailing pseudo-Matisse aesthetic in child art. I think this is serious because the new popular child art idiom is not the one in which the real child artist (the one who will ultimately become an artist) naturally works.

There are reasons for this somewhat paradoxical situation. It is apparently normal for young children to express a feeling for colour, design and even form which is remarkably sympathetic to the aesthetic permeating much of the best modern painting. This fact in itself, though it once provided a stick to beat Matisse and Picasso with, is really a compliment to the moderns: it demonstrates the natural validity of their resources; it shows us one of the living sources of their inspiration. But the child who is likely to develop into an adult artist is not normal, at any rate when it comes to painting and drawing. Where his playmates happily splash about effortlessly achieving results as pleasing to his sophisticated elders as to himself, such a child is most likely to be already at a stage of uncomfortable artistic self-consciousness. He is likely at an early age to be aware of problems of representation, of making his drawing *like*. He may even be regarded as an academic artist in intention if not in accomplishment.

Thus in the 8 to 11 age group I thought 170, by Juliet Ann Edwards, 174, by Michael Greer and 187, by John Page, more promising in this long-term sense than the admittedly more attractive but less thoughtful efforts which were commended. Powers of observation, of which their contemporaries are devoid, showed in the work of these three. Children in the older age group, 12 to 16, are aware of the works of adult artists and are much influenced by them. Here too, I differ from the judges—about the best artists for children to follow: I should prefer Bonnard where they like Bawden. Certainly the awards favour illustrative, literary, graphic and calligraphic talents at the expense of the more painterly entrants. The winner, Claudia Williams, and the runner up, Shirley Blomfield, apart from being almost identical (they are at the same school) are at best decorative illustrators. But the extremely painterly entry, *Self-Portrait*, 39, by Jerry Benjamin, which, with its hints of Soutine, shows more plastic talent than anything else in the show, does not even get a "commended." Nor does the charming Bonnard-like *Geranium on Windowsill*, 46, by Ruth Bowditch, with its excellent handling of sensitive ragged paint: nor does a Vlaminck-like *Hurrying Crowd*, 44, by J. E. Bosley; nor a beautifully composed interior of a girl at a dressing-table called *After*

the Shampoo, 55, by Shirley Crabb. And all the following things, to me the cream of the exhibition, were also ignored by the judges: a poetic landscape fantasy, *What Lies Beyond*, 54, by Philippa Cooper; an exquisitely literal, detailed, Breugelesque landscape, *Spring Sunset*, 63, by I. D. Dougill; a rhythmic, Rouault-like head, *The Farmer*, 67, by Ernest Eccles; two versions from the same point of *The Canal at Bath*, 124, by Eileen Taylor, beautifully composed and painted (an echo of F. Hodgkins?) and 96, by Pauline Millard; a sort of Bonnard-Klee *City Street*, 97, by Joan Miller; a Christopher Wood landscape, *From the Train Window*, 117, by Jacqueline Simmonds and a Wood-or-Piper-like *Dark Street*, 135, by June M. Wheatley, sophisticated enough to make a backcloth for a Gorbals ballet. There would be nothing surprising in any of these artists turning up in the summer shows in a few years time.

And now a postscript: visit the small exhibition of drawings and paintings by Natalie d'Arbeloff at the A.I.A. Gallery in Lisle Street. Some of her drawings are better than some one sees nowadays by Gaudier-Brzeska.

PATRICK HERON

JOLLY JACK LUDD

IT is 1975 in Mr. Priestley's *Summer Day's Dream* at the St. Martin's, and the atomic war has left England a shattered ruin, Shrewsbury its largest town, and most of its population dead or emigrated. The survivors are living a world-forgetting-by-the-world-forgot pastoral, cultivating their gardens, brewing their own beer, and spending their evenings on chamber music, Shakespeare, and kindly conversation. Into this bucolic paradise descend three executives of the great world of power and planning. An American businessman, an Asian scientist, a U.S.S.R. woman official, are to set up a gigantic factory, a workers' town peopled with imported labour and enlivened by all the hideous delights of mass amusement: their purpose is to rip the chalk out of the Downs, and use it for some new synthetic substance. They are entertained at a decaying country house by its eighty-year-old owner; his daughter-in-law, a woman of great goodness and penetrating vision; his bailiff, a ripe old countryman; and his two grandchildren. Their hosts' kindness, and the charm of England's Summer Day's Dream, relax their neurotic tension. The grim but glamorous Russian falls for the fiddle-playing grandson; the Asian remembers he was a poet before the needs of the world made him a scientist; and the American is intrigued by the purity and directness of the granddaughter. They are induced to spare the happy English the horrors of civilisation, and return, spiritually enriched, to their own world of telegrams and anger.

In an impersonal world of efficiency, planning, science, money and power, Mr. Priestley reminds us of the human affections, the natural life, the bond that links families and small communities, the virtue that lies in productive work with hand and brain. He directs us to the small unit, away from the international conference back to the parish pump. Civilisation will survive only if the great centres of work and power are broken up, only if the rhythms of nature and the land replace the rhythm of the machines. His message must have an appeal in these days of exhortation and nagging, when production is the only cry, and when increased production brings no reward, but only increased anxiety and further effort; yet it is strictly a sentimental appeal, Rousseau for the atom-age, Chesterton and Belloc against the Welfare State. It is (if compared with *They Came To A City*, or *An Inspector Calls*) Mr. Priestley's *News from Nowhere*.

Perhaps all this is taking a Dream too seriously? I do not think so. Only an intense seriousness of purpose could have made Priestley produce so dull a play. His dramatic craftsmanship, his interest in people, his ear for dialogue that have made so many good plays, are here neglected for pawky wisdom from the old, and eager-heart enthusiasm from the young. The characters are magazine types, e.g., goodhearted sugar-daddy, snow-queen commissar, Will Rogers-Priestley old man—and the emotional moments are cheaply served up with a violin off and the moonlight—a kind of Shrewsbury Concerto appeal—or with pseudo-poetic rhetoric.

He avoids all the problems that he raises. We cannot abolish the Great Wen by dropping an atom bomb on it: we ought not to buy our peace of mind by leaving millions in the backward areas to starve: even if we believe that a hill-billy life is preferable to Suburbia, we can't create it by smashing the machines. No amount of kindliness and cracker-barrel moralising will turn Jack Ludd into a philosopher; Jack Priestley can't put back the clock, and I hope it is not impertinent to say that he, of all our dramatists, ought not to want to. Over Bruddersfield, lions' den or not, hangs the motto, No Footsteps Backward.

Michael MacOwan has given the play every chance. His designer, Reece Pemberton, cleverly suggests a house falling graciously into decay in a charmed landscape, and his set is beautifully built, painted and lit. The effects, telecom screen and atom car, are boldly and efficiently carried out with none of the difficulties burked. The acting is earnestly sincere, and the adults almost persuade us that they are characters, not voices, for Mr. Priestley. Herbert Lomas plays a man of eighty without a trace of those conventional devices for suggesting age for which G.B.S. so lambasted Irving. Charles Lamb as the farm bailiff and Eileen Thorndike as the daughter-in-law, are unobtrusively convincing, and Adina Mandlova, John Salew and Olaf Pooley could not be improved on. The grandchildren I was not so happy about. Adrienne Corri has looks and vitality but she seemed to me to be overdoing it all the time, and John Westbrook played as if he knew more of the Acting Academy than the hayfield.

Mr. Priestley knows his business in the theatre and I would not like to say that this play will not run: but I shall be surprised if it flourishes like the *Linden Tree*.

R. D. SMITH

RADIO NOTES

I GET the impression that there is now no one in the B.B.C., with the exception of Mr. MacNeice, and, more rarely, Mr. Francis Dillon, who takes delight in radio for its own sake, who is intoxicated with the potentialities of the medium as, for instance, Mr. Tyrone Guthrie was twenty years ago. Perhaps the age of experiment is over; certainly radio features approximate more and more to a set of rigid formulæ, and consequently become progressively duller and less easy (because, in a sense, too easy) to listen to: one has heard them, it so often seems, all before. Hence the pleasure which Mr. Norman Corwin's *Citizen of the World*, broadcast in the Light Programme last week, gave me. Mr. Corwin is the leading American radio-feature writer and, on the evidence of this and those of his other programmes I have heard, the greatest virtuoso in radio. Sometimes I have felt that he was nothing but a virtuoso: two or three fantasies of his in the "Columbia Workshop" series which the B.B.C. put out here four or five years ago struck me as merely damnably ingenious. But in *Citizen of the World* his virtuosity is married to important subject-matter, the international struggle, organised by the various agencies of the United Nations, against hunger, poverty, disease, soil-erosion and war. Not the easiest of subjects to make new and arresting; yet in Mr. Corwin's hands the treatment of the theme of one world was continuously exciting and was made so by his evident delight in what are sometimes contemptuously dismissed as the tricks of radio, but which here stirred the imagination and revivified what otherwise might have been the pious platitudes of internationalism. One example. Mr. Corwin began by showing how every man, even now, is caught up in an international network, the network of radio communications which, unheard, surround him wherever he is. He illustrated this with obvious instances. But the last instance wasn't obvious: it was a snatch of the station announcer at Radio Port Moresby, New Guinea, signing on in—pidgin English; and the effect was not that of a trick but of a wild poetry. In other words, through his technical virtuosity Mr. Corwin was able to express a genuinely imaginative vision of internationalism at work. Now I have two hopes: that we may hear more of Mr. Corwin's programmes written, as this was, for the Columbia Broadcasting System, in whose studios it was produced; and that *Citizen of the World* may be repeated in the Third, whose listeners, though they may know all about the activities of U.N., are not given so many opportunities of hearing programmes that are first-rate radio.

Compared with Mr. Corwin's script, Mr. Julian Duguid's *W. H. Hudson* appeared as a pretty average literary feature. I don't think its presentation would have kept anyone who was not interested in Hudson listening; and readers of Hudson did not, I fancy, find their knowledge increased. The programme failed; yet it may be valuable to see where it failed. Not, I think, because of the conventional form of the script, the discussion between the gaucho of *El Ombu*, Hudson and Morley Roberts; but because Mr. Duguid relied too much on quotations from Hudson's works put into the actors' mouths. Magnificent as the prose is, it is highly literary prose, at almost the furthest possible remove from speech; and this in itself was enough to kill any chance of obtaining an illusion of reality in the acting.

Two talks must be briefly commented on. One, *The Parable of the Talents*, was something of an occasion, for it was, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Robert Graves's first appearance at the microphone. Its matter was fascinating; having years ago rewritten *David Copperfield*, Mr. Graves showed us how he would rewrite the New Testament. His reconstruction of the parable of the talents, the interpretation of which must have bothered many Christians for years, was especially interesting. Then, as though in riposte to Professor Gordon Ray's recent talk on Thackeray, Professor J. Y. T. Grieg gave us *Thackeray and His Mother*, a first-rate piece of criticism, the most important contribution to its subject, I'd say, since Professor Ray's edition of the *Letters*.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE MOVIES

"Le Secret de Mayerling," at the Polytechnic
"Dear Mr. Prohack," at the New Gallery and the Tivoli

It is strange that until now Regent Street should have been without a Continental cinema. Once, at the lower end, there was the little Paris, taken over by Itma during the war, and now a permanent outpost of the B.B.C. The Polytechnic in Upper Regent Street, with the first of a programme of French films, strikes out under the very shadow of Broadcasting House. Locality measured by the yard or foot being, in London, so essential to theatrical enterprises, I wonder whether the Polytechnic hasn't been over-hopeful in expecting its patrons to deviate 50 yards from Oxford Street? Every inch there already hums with an off-the-air consciousness: perhaps from some watchful and untalkative section of the B.B.C. itself (if such exists) an audience is anticipated? The Polytechnic means to present French films new to London; three cinemas (Academy, Studio One and Curzon) and an occasional fourth (Continental) are already doing that; and to judge from their published list, this new rival may not offer any very damaging competition in the quality of films shown, at any rate.

As an opening piece, *Le Secret de Mayerling* seems to me not quite good enough. Its lure

lies in the word Mayerling and in the promise of a realistic exploration of romance. "Believed for half a century to be suicide: now proved political murder." Thus, the programme cover; but turn over a couple of leaves and the claim becomes more equivocal. "Based upon indisputable documents, *Le Secret de Mayerling* gives the explanation of this drama in which love and high-level politics, etc." The documents, that's to say, not the explanations, are indisputable; and of course we are never told what those documents are or how far they go.

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The most interesting thing in the show (a Hitchens and a Ben Nicholson of normal excellence apart) is Carel Weight's very big picture, "Returning Home." Opposite it is an equally big composition, Merlyn Evans's "The Trial." Weight's Utrillo-like vision of a London evening street scene is compact of painterly feeling and devoid of theory. With Evans the exact opposite is true. Two small pictures of Venice, painted by Duncan Grant last year, show him still a master of colour (and paint) whenever he gets further afield than his overworked Sussex barn.

Correspondence

UNION RECOGNITION

SIR,—Your favourable mention of our organisation is the more appreciated in that the fact that we are fighting a rearguard battle of the historic trade union struggle is not so widely known as we could wish. In spite of consistent and often virulent opposition our membership has risen to 29,000, but we are still denied recognition by four of the "Big Five."

The Internal Associations are as much the creatures of the employers, fostered for the specific purpose of denying independent representation, as were any of the "Company unions" which, from time to time in most industries and in most countries, have vainly attempted to prevent the establishment of genuine trade union negotiation. After thirty years of struggle, the time cannot now be far removed when the banks will be compelled by the vigour of our insistence and by force of public opinion, to conform with accepted practice and common decency.

May I mention that we organise all bank staffs, messengers, non-clerical and salaried, with the exception of the small number of maintenance men (electricians, carpenters, etc.), who are eligible for membership of their appropriate craft union.

HUGH JENKINS,
Publicity Officer
The National Union of Bank Employees.

SIR,—I fail to follow your reasoning in comparing the difficulties of the trade unions in the B.B.C. with those of the banks. The fact that only one trade union has a complaint in banking and a dozen or so in the B.B.C. is, in my view, beside the point.

The Corporation should recognise all bona-fide trade unions which have membership amongst its staff. Incidentally, like the National Union of Bank Employees, all those who are complaining of non-recognition are, to use your phrase, well conducted and firmly established. Further, as it is not clear from your reference, they cover between them all the grades employed by the Corporation whether full-time or part-time, artistic, professional or manual.

But the Unions concerned have, on the other hand, anticipated the possible criticisms to which you refer. Under the guidance of the Trades Union Congress General Council, there has been a series of meetings between representatives of all the trade unions. They have worked out and submitted to the Corporation the framework of a Council for joint negotiation through one body. At the same time, spheres of influence have been agreed in order that assurances can be given that there will be no competing claims by the different trade unions for the same groups of work.

In refusing to negotiate with the trade unions the B.B.C. was aware of both these points.

GEO. H. ELVIN,
General Secretary
Association of Cinematograph and Allied Technicians.
2 Soho Square, London, W.1.

THE AMERICAN PRESS

SIR,—I have just seen the column "So They Say" in your issue of August 27. It seems to imply that the recent war of words between the American press and our own was provoked by a few irresponsible British correspondents in the United States.

Artificially fostered, perhaps. Provoked, no. This newspaper runs a fortnightly feature called "American Viewpoint," which tries as fairly as possible (we are a strictly non-party paper) to summarise American press opinion about current affairs outside the United States. Our information is drawn from a very wide cross-section of American newspapers and periodicals, many of which we obtain through the generous co-operation of the State Department and the U.S. Embassy over here. I believe this feature has no precise counterpart in British journalism at the moment.

An analysis of our sources late in June showed a sudden rise in the temperature of "moderate" American newspapers. For this there were two chief reasons—the Anglo-Argentinian trade talks and the intra-European payments negotiations; and the fact was duly reported in "American Viewpoint" on June 30. By July 14 we felt bound to report that "the time of limited and specific frictions . . . is over. The critics now have their sights aimed on the whole economic philosophy of our Labour Government. Probably it was bound to come, this clash between the two ways of life: and certainly it's going to take a lot of diplomacy to gear them happily together."

There is no doubt that the picture of "a screaming American eagle ready to use its claws and beak"—I quote from Don Iddon's article in the *Mail* on August 3—was greatly overdrawn. But, equally, there is no doubt that for weeks before that, middle-of-the-road press opinion was restive and critical. To this newspaper one of the most curious features of the whole affair was the length of time it took Mr. Iddon, Mr. Francis Williams and other correspondents of our national press in the United States to get round to the trend of American feeling.

Bristol Evening Post. DOUGLAS CLARK,
London Editor

THE PIDDINGTON ACT

SIR,—It is reassuring to know that you do not consider the Piddington act to be a serious contribution to a new range of scientific enquiry. Eye-witnesses can recall similar acts in the music-halls of fifty years ago, just as impressive in themselves, but lacking the wide publicity now made possible by broadcasting. In my opinion, Sydney Piddington's biographical background gives the act a flying start: life in a Japanese prison camp, his reading of the experiments of Professor Rhine and the subsequent practice of his methods of thought transmission. As propaganda, this seems to me quite brilliant. His wife undermined this somewhat when she stated, in an interview with a *Daily Mail* reporter, that the act was a means to an end, the goal being a house in the suburbs of Sydney, and a family of three—a good goal too, but surely one who has mastered the art of thought transmission would be unlikely to give it up: would a mathematician decide to refute mathematics, or a Greek scholar repudiate Greek?

Commander Campbell, in an article in the *Radio Times*, states "Piddington, in transmitting thought, says that the easiest matter to transmit is that which can be visualised in concrete form"! Hunter Diack describes two similar performers who told him that they transmitted and received the subject as words written on an imaginary blackboard. Is there not something odd about these statements? Professor Rhine uses diagrams for the practice of thought-transmission. This seems reasonable, for the idea of a square or circle, each a mathematical concept, can be adequately conveyed by the diagram which, in such a case, represents the idea. But there are many thoughts which cannot be represented diagrammatically or symbolically. In such a case, should not the basic thought itself be transmitted, so as to give an impression of the nature of the subject first—animal, vegetable or mineral, like the parlour game, before a further advanced stage of particular identification is attempted? For example, in transmitting the thought of an asp, is it not logical to think that the first impression received would be of some form of animal life, reptilian and wriggling, rather than the deciphering of three formal and static signs,—A-S-P, on an imaginary blackboard?

To illustrate this, two performers—Australians also as it happened—gave an alleged thought-transmission act just before the war, in one session of which the woman partner made an error in stating that the design of a brooch was in the form of a stag: on being told she was wrong, she corrected her answer to "star." As there is no association of ideas between "star" and "stag," it would seem that her answer depended on the spelling; considered as thought-transmission, there is something very false about such a technique. It is suggestive of code.

Strong emotions, such as fear, anger and joy, can readily, even involuntarily, be communicated to others, without word or gesture, transcending even the barriers of language. Is it not possible that it is a primitive faculty which humanity is losing, rather than one we are about to acquire?

Aberdeenshire. MARGARET S. M. MCGREGOR.

SIR,—May I congratulate you on your outspoken article on the "Piddingtons" performance of August 25, which I witnessed as a private spectator? I was asked to be one of the judges (save the mark) on this occasion but I told the B.B.C. that unless I was permitted to impose what I considered to be scientific conditions I should probably spoil the show by introducing one or two slight variations. The B.B.C. withdrew their offer and apparently this resulted in you, Sir, becoming their stooge.

It is indeed deplorable that the B.B.C. should have sacrificed serious scientific enquiry for the sake of entertainment. S. G. SOAL,

[Holder of the Penolt Studentship in Psychical Research at Trinity College, Cambridge; Senior Lecturer in Pure Mathematics, Queen Mary College, University of London.]

THE HARDENSIAN DRAGON

SIR,—There are yet other implications in Professor A. C. Hardy's acceptance of the statistical evidence of telepathy and his suggestion that the operation of group telepathy might modify the evolution of species. Stemming from the branches of speculation indicated by Ritchie Calder in your last issue, the following ideas arise.

Foremost is the breakdown of certain barriers which have been rigidly imposed by academic learning, in order to segregate various aspects of truth for specialized study. In hunting the Hardensian dragon, the frontiers between science and philosophy may have to be invaded, bridges thrown across the turbid rivers of controversy, and rocks of scientific and political prejudice blasted.

The first rock to be blasted is the idea that the Hardensian Heresy supports the Herrenvolk myth versus Marxian Dialectical Materialism. By dragging science into the political arena, truth is obscured, and science debased by tendentious twisting. In effect there is not a pin to choose between these two distortions. The result would be equally retrograde and disintegrating if either were allowed to triumph.

The question is not whether power of mind over matter exists, but whether or not this power is to be exerted consciously into racial or universal channels. Is it to be directed towards world unity or world domination by a particular race?

The Marxian contention that matter is primary and mind secondary, and the mystic belief that spirit is primary and matter secondary, becomes an unreal issue when it is suggested that both matter and mind are equally necessary to significant existence in every phase of reality. Without matter, spirit is formless. Without spirit, matter is formless. The nature of matter and the nature of mind in extra-physical spheres is bound to remain a mystery, since the part cannot comprehend the whole. The part, nevertheless, can become conscious of being a part, and aware of its powers, limited though they are, to choose between alternatives, and to move in purposive directions.

A bridge to be crossed in this dragon hunt is that over the river which divides science from psycho-analysis. Ritchie Calder's remark that instinct "would be a kind of thought transference from past generations" impinges on the idea of the universal unconscious, from which a series of bridges over many rivers and torrents of orthodoxy would at last lead, as he also suggests, to a limited version of the *élan vital*.

The fact that the part cannot contain elements absent in the whole confirms the idea that mind must be the motive force in the universal un-conscious—*un*conscious as far as the species is concerned, but conscious with regard to the Prime Mover. This, the final bridge to cross, leads one to the super-fairyland where angels and dragons contend in the ancient symbologies representing those aspects of truth which we have come to neglect, because of their long and distressful abuse. MARY BASIL HALL

8 Burgess Hill,
London, N.W.2.

Food in Pubs

It is the aim of the brewing industry to encourage the serving of food in public houses by providing facilities for catering wherever it is practicable to do so. The licensee is, however, obliged to secure a permit from the food authorities before he can serve even sandwiches made with lettuces and tomatoes from his own garden, and to do this he must produce evidence of genuine consumer need.

Where consumer need has been proved "the trade" can point to evidence of remarkable progress. For example, one brewing firm recently announced that an average of more than 141,000 main meals were served weekly in its houses. Again, to quote an independent observer (Mr. Maurice Gorham in his new book "Back to the Local"): "Before the war it could be claimed that London pubs provided as good food of its kind as you could get in England . . . Food is a problem now for the pubs as for everybody else, but the machinery remains the same. You can still find everything varying from the separate restaurant to the dish of sandwiches on the bar."

Issued by the Brewers' Society

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Correspondence

UNION RECOGNITION

SIR,—Your favourable mention of our organisation is the more appreciated in that the fact that we are fighting a rearguard battle of the historic trade union struggle is not so widely known as we could wish. In spite of consistent and often virulent opposition our membership has risen to 29,000, but we are still denied recognition by four of the "Big Five."

The Internal Associations are as much the creatures of the employers, fostered for the specific purpose of denying independent representation, as were any of the "Company unions" which, from time to time in most industries and in most countries, have vainly attempted to prevent the establishment of genuine trade union negotiation. After thirty years of struggle, the time cannot now be far removed when the banks will be compelled by the vigour of our insistence and by force of public opinion, to conform with accepted practice and common decency.

May I mention that we organise all bank staffs, messengers, non-clerical and salaried, with the exception of the small number of maintenance men (electricians, carpenters, etc.), who are eligible for membership of their appropriate craft union.

HUGH JENKINS,
Publicity Officer
The National Union of Bank Employees.

SIR,—I fail to follow your reasoning in comparing the difficulties of the trade unions in the B.B.C. with those of the banks. The fact that only one trade union has a complaint in banking and a dozen or so in the B.B.C. is, in my view, beside the point.

The Corporation should recognise all bona-fide trade unions which have membership amongst its staff. Incidentally, like the National Union of Bank Employees, all those who are complaining of non-recognition are, to use your phrase, well conducted and firmly established. Further, as it is not clear from your reference, they cover between them all the grades employed by the Corporation whether full-time or part-time, artistic, professional or manual.

But the Unions concerned have, on the other hand, anticipated the possible criticisms to which you refer. Under the guidance of the Trades Union Congress General Council, there has been a series of meetings between representatives of all the trade unions. They have worked out and submitted to the Corporation the framework of a Council for joint negotiation through one body. At the same time, spheres of influence have been agreed in order that assurances can be given that there will be no competing claims by the different trade unions for the same groups of work.

In refusing to negotiate with the trade unions the B.B.C. was aware of both these points.

GEO. H. ELVIN,
General Secretary
Association of Cinematograph and Allied Technicians.
2 Soho Square, London, W.1.

THE AMERICAN PRESS

SIR,—I have just seen the column "So They Say" in your issue of August 27. It seems to imply that the recent war of words between the American press and our own was provoked by a few irresponsible British correspondents in the United States.

Artificially fostered, perhaps. Provoked, no. This newspaper runs a fortnightly feature called "American Viewpoint," which tries as fairly as possible (we are a strictly non-party paper) to summarise American press opinion about current affairs outside the United States. Our information is drawn from a very wide cross-section of American newspapers and periodicals, many of which we obtain through the generous co-operation of the State Department and the U.S. Embassy over here. I believe this feature has no precise counterpart in British journalism at the moment.

An analysis of our sources late in June showed a sudden rise in the temperature of "moderate" American newspapers. For this there were two chief reasons—the Anglo-Argentinian trade talks and the intra-European payments negotiations; and the fact was duly reported in "American Viewpoint" on June 30. By July 14 we felt bound to report that "the time of limited and specific frictions . . . is over. The critics now have their sights aimed on the whole economic philosophy of our Labour Government. Probably it was bound to come, this clash between the two ways of life: and certainly it's going to take a lot of diplomacy to gear them happily together."

There is no doubt that the picture of "a screaming American eagle ready to use its claws and beak"—I quote from Don Iddon's article in the *Mail* on August 3—was greatly overdrawn. But, equally, there is no doubt that for weeks before that, middle-of-the-road press opinion was restive and critical. To this newspaper one of the most curious features of the whole affair was the length of time it took Mr. Iddon, Mr. Francis Williams and other correspondents of our national press in the United States to get round to the trend of American feeling.

Bristol Evening Post. DOUGLAS CLARK,
London Editor

THE PIDDINGTON ACT

SIR,—It is reassuring to know that you do not consider the Piddington act to be a serious contribution to a new range of scientific enquiry. Eye-witnesses can recall similar acts in the music-halls of fifty years ago, just as impressive in themselves, but lacking the wide publicity now made possible by broadcasting. In my opinion, Sydney Piddington's biographical background gives the act a flying start: life in a Japanese prison camp, his reading of the experiments of Professor Rhine and the subsequent practice of his methods of thought transmission. As propaganda, this seems to me quite brilliant. His wife undermined this somewhat when she stated, in an interview with a *Daily Mail* reporter, that the act was a means to an end, the goal being a house in the suburbs of Sydney, and a family of three—a good goal too, but surely one who has mastered the art of thought transmission would be unlikely to give it up: would a mathematician decide to refute mathematics, or a Greek scholar repudiate Greek?

Commander Campbell, in an article in the *Radio Times*, states "Piddington, in transmitting thought, says that the easiest matter to transmit is that which can be visualised in concrete form"! Hunter Diack describes two similar performers who told him that they transmitted and received the subject as words written on an imaginary blackboard. Is there not something odd about these statements? Professor Rhine uses diagrams for the practice of thought-transmission. This seems reasonable, for the idea of a square or circle, each a mathematical concept, can be adequately conveyed by the diagram which, in such a case, represents the idea. But there are many thoughts which cannot be represented diagrammatically or symbolically. In such a case, should not the basic thought itself be transmitted, so as to give an impression of the nature of the subject first—animal, vegetable or mineral, like the parlour game, before a further advanced stage of particular identification is attempted? For example, in transmitting the thought of an asp, is it not logical to think that the first impression received would be of some form of animal life, reptilian and wriggling, rather than the deciphering of three formal and static signs,—A-S-P, on an imaginary blackboard?

To illustrate this, two performers—Australians also as it happened—gave an alleged thought-transmission act just before the war, in one session of which the woman partner made an error in stating that the design of a brooch was in the form of a stag: on being told she was wrong, she corrected her answer to "star." As there is no association of ideas between "star" and "stag," it would seem that her answer depended on the spelling; considered as thought-transmission, there is something very false about such a technique. It is suggestive of code.

Strong emotions, such as fear, anger and joy, can readily, even involuntarily, be communicated to others, without word or gesture, transcending even the barriers of language. Is it not possible that it is a primitive faculty which humanity is losing, rather than one we are about to acquire?

Aberdeenshire. MARGARET S. M. MCGREGOR.

SIR,—May I congratulate you on your outspoken article on the "Piddingtons" performance of August 25, which I witnessed as a private spectator? I was asked to be one of the judges (save the mark) on this occasion but I told the B.B.C. that unless I was permitted to impose what I considered to be scientific conditions I should probably spoil the show by introducing one or two slight variations. The B.B.C. withdrew their offer and apparently this resulted in you, Sir, becoming their stooge.

It is indeed deplorable that the B.B.C. should have sacrificed serious scientific enquiry for the sake of entertainment. S. G. SOAL,

[Holder of the Penolt Studentship in Psychical Research at Trinity College, Cambridge; Senior Lecturer in Pure Mathematics, Queen Mary College, University of London.]

THE HARDENSIAN DRAGON

SIR,—There are yet other implications in Professor A. C. Hardy's acceptance of the statistical evidence of telepathy and his suggestion that the operation of group telepathy might modify the evolution of species. Stemming from the branches of speculation indicated by Ritchie Calder in your last issue, the following ideas arise.

Foremost is the breakdown of certain barriers which have been rigidly imposed by academic learning, in order to segregate various aspects of truth for specialized study. In hunting the Hardensian dragon, the frontiers between science and philosophy may have to be invaded, bridges thrown across the turbid rivers of controversy, and rocks of scientific and political prejudice blasted.

The first rock to be blasted is the idea that the Hardensian Heresy supports the Herrenvolk myth versus Marxian Dialectical Materialism. By dragging science into the political arena, truth is obscured, and science debased by tendentious twisting. In effect there is not a pin to choose between these two distortions. The result would be equally retrograde and disintegrating if either were allowed to triumph.

The question is not whether power of mind over matter exists, but whether or not this power is to be exerted consciously into racial or universal channels. Is it to be directed towards world unity or world domination by a particular race?

The Marxian contention that matter is primary and mind secondary, and the mystic belief that spirit is primary and matter secondary, becomes an unreal issue when it is suggested that both matter and mind are equally necessary to significant existence in every phase of reality. Without matter, spirit is formless. Without spirit, matter is formless. The nature of matter and the nature of mind in extra-physical spheres is bound to remain a mystery, since the part cannot comprehend the whole. The part, nevertheless, can become conscious of being a part, and aware of its powers, limited though they are, to choose between alternatives, and to move in purposive directions.

A bridge to be crossed in this dragon hunt is that over the river which divides science from psycho-analysis. Ritchie Calder's remark that instinct "would be a kind of thought transference from past generations" impinges on the idea of the universal unconscious, from which a series of bridges over many rivers and torrents of orthodoxy would at last lead, as he also suggests, to a limited version of the *élan vital*.

The fact that the part cannot contain elements absent in the whole confirms the idea that mind must be the motive force in the universal un-conscious—*un*conscious as far as the species is concerned, but conscious with regard to the Prime Mover. This, the final bridge to cross, leads one to the super-fairyland where angels and dragons contend in the ancient symbologies representing those aspects of truth which we have come to neglect, because of their long and distressful abuse. MARY BASIL HALL.

8 Burgess Hill,
London, N.W.2.

Food in Pubs

It is the aim of the brewing industry to encourage the serving of food in public houses by providing facilities for catering wherever it is practicable to do so. The licensee is, however, obliged to secure a permit from the food authorities before he can serve even sandwiches made with lettuces and tomatoes from his own garden, and to do this he must produce evidence of genuine consumer need.

Where consumer need has been proved "the trade" can point to evidence of remarkable progress. For example, one brewing firm recently announced that an average of more than 141,000 main meals were served weekly in its houses. Again, to quote an independent observer (Mr. Maurice Gorham in his new book "Back to the Local"): "Before the war it could be claimed that London pubs provided as good food of its kind as you could get in England . . . Food is a problem now for the pubs as for everybody else, but the machinery remains the same. You can still find everything varying from the separate restaurant to the dish of sandwiches on the bar."

Issued by the Brewers' Society

EZRA POUND

SIR,—By mischance I have only just read the issue in which Dr. Bowra's petulant and superficial review of Pound's *Pisan Cantos* appeared. It surely exacts a reply from the average fair-minded reader. Your reviewer states that Pound is considered a "mountebank and a buffoon" except by a "small very select" group. This is not so. Pound is an important influence still. There is an Ezra Pound Circle in London. Appreciative reviews of his writings have appeared in the recent past, written by younger poets such as John Heath-Stubbs and John Berryman.

Dr. Bowra condemns Pound for "his contempt for anything that might be thought pretty or warm-hearted or merely human." Cathay—for example—is, at a minimum estimate, "pretty." Pound's habit of gossip in the *Cantos* indicates at least an interest in the "merely human." A poet may perhaps claim that his business is to be interested rather in the beautiful, the passionate and the heroic.

If accuracy is to be desired, so also is consistency. After reproaching Pound for writing at tedious length of "the bad influence of Bankers," Dr. Bowra later describes his notions as having "a smack of Wall Street" about them. Whatever kind of reactionary Pound may be, he is not that kind. A reviewer may dislike his politics; but should at least make some effort to understand them. There is also the phrase "nothing but a bore, and an American bore." Who are these American bores? Scott Fitzgerald, William James, Mr. Santayana, Mr. Eliot? Edmund Wilson, I suppose, is a typically conversational American writer. Some persons may prefer his to the prim and bloodless style of Dr. Bowra. The review tells us much about Dr. Bowra's tetchy attitude towards the Americans; but very little about *The Pisan Cantos*.

IAIN FLETCHER.

ELECTED SILENCE

SIR,—The issues raised by your correspondents on the subject of Mr. Merton's conversion are supremely important because the Roman Catholic Church is at present engaged in a militant struggle for expansion—an expansion that must be resisted by those who do not believe that it will be beneficial to mankind. Allow me therefore to make the following brief comments on Mr. Waugh's recent letter to you:

Mr. Waugh writes that he would not presume in any particular case to say that another man's religious experience is "entirely spurious." The operative word here is "entirely." It implies that Mr. Waugh reserves the right to say that another man's religious experience is at least partly spurious. It is an intelligent curtailment of his right to judge others, but not a denial.

He then goes on to say that the existence of counterfeits cannot affect the authenticity of an original. This is open to only one interpretation: that every form of non-Catholic adherence to the Christian faith is a counterfeit (that is to say essentially fraudulent) whereas the Roman Catholic form is authentic *because it is the original one*. There is, of course, no logical connection in this context between authenticity and originality. Originally it was thought that the earth was flat; it does not follow from this that the earth's flatness is therefore authentic. To claim that the Roman Catholic faith is the only authentic one because it is primigenial would be legitimate if Christ Himself were the undoubted founder of the Roman Catholic Church with all its rituals, dogmas, and structural features. But it cannot be proved that He was. On the contrary, there is not a shred of conclusive evidence to support this presumption. Roman Catholic apologists cannot, and I believe do not, deny that the Church is based on anything more conclusive than their own interpretation of a number of Christ's acts and pronouncements. The historical evidence simply is not there. This being so, the Roman Catholic Church's primigenial position in Time has no validity since an interpretation is not necessarily correct because it was the first to be propounded.

In the last paragraph of his letter Mr. Waugh's reasoning becomes even more fallacious. He wishes to know whether, assuming for the moment that Mr. Merton's conversion is an illusion, the whole Cistercian order is not then likewise the product of an illusion, and, if not, whether Mr. Merton is an exception. The question bristles with false assumptions and untenable presuppositions. The implication behind it is that although one man may be deluded it is unlikely that a great number of men should be similarly deluded. And from this follows with inexorable logic that the likelihood of delusion is exactly proportional to the greatness of the number. And yet Mr. Waugh would have us believe that the religion of millions of non-Catholic Christians is a delusion!

R. VAN EYCK

4 Godfrey Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.

SIR,—Mr. Pritchett's letter is entirely satisfactory. He withdraws his claim to be a Protestant and re-appears as one (like myself) "of Protestant upbringing." He admits that he has so far forgotten what he was taught, that "the existence of God, the truth of the Bible, the reality of prayer" are meaningless phrases to him. He does not know whether Vocation exists. Yet he does not feel any doubt about his competence to review a book on the subject. Try him on Mathematics. I am sure a lot of American books on that subject get overpraised.

EVELYN WAUGH

CULTURED PLAYGROUND

SIR,—I was pleased to read the spirited denunciation by J. M. Ellis of Critic's Swiss Diary. To his list of the Swiss who are distinguished in "the world of the spirit" may I add the following? Ferdinand Hodler, J. L. Aberli, and Freudenberger, artists; Rodolphe Toepffer, writer and artist; Sismordi, historian; Carl Spitteler, poet; Victor Cherbuliez and Edouard Rod, novelists; J. D. Wyss, author of "Swiss Family Robinson"; and lastly, but by no means the least well-known, Mme. Tussaud of waxworks fame.

LEWIS BURGESS

[Critic writes: "Anyone would think I had denied taste and talent to the Swiss whose praises I always sing. I only said, as an example of the fact that the source of art is obscure, that one might have expected more imaginative and artistic achievement from people living in such inspiring surroundings."

—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

SPANISH DEMOCRATS

SIR,—A Committee of Aid and Defence of Spanish democrats has been formed under the auspices of the Federacion Española de Deportados e Internados Politicos (Spanish Federation of Victims of Fascism).

The purpose of this Committee is to assist the victims of an injustice which persists through the complicity or the silence of those in whose hands it would be to put an end to it. Those who formed this Committee feel that they must try to limit the consequences of this injustice as far as it is in their power. They cannot, as yet, restore freedom to Spain; at least they want to conserve those Spanish lives who defend this freedom. The problem that occupies us is not a political one, but that of the solidarity among free men. The Committee calls on all these free men, whatever may be their ideologies, to join it, so that there might be an international force which helps all that may transform this Spain of gaols and exile into what, in our view, would be the real Spain.

Enquiries to: A. Ruiz, 5, Fairfax Road, London, N.W.6.

ANDRÉ GIDE, FRANCOIS MAURIAC, ALBERT CAMUS, J-P. SARTRE, REMY ROURE, RENÉ CHAR, IGNACIO SILONE. CARLOS LEVI, GEORGES ALTMAN, CLAUDE BOURDET, ANDRÉ BRETON, GEORGE ORWELL, PABLO CASALS, FERNAND DEHOUSSE, JEF LAST, HENRIETTE ROLAND-HOLST, Y C. SCHILT.

MINISTERIAL TELEPATHY

SIR,—Whatever may be Kingsley Martin's opinion of telepathy and the Piddingtons, there can surely be no doubt that a most remarkable exhibition of Telepathy has occurred between Foreign Secretary Bevin, and Secretary for War Shinwell.

Bevin was miles away on the high seas, a Pilgrim to U.S.A., when Shinwell received and delivered Bevin's original and copyright thought "*There must be no stabbing in the back.*" As there is no evidence of any code, or the co-operation of any stooge, mermaid or B.B.C. you must Sir, be convinced, that this extraordinary and brilliant piece of Telepathy is unique, and one of the most important happenings in the world history of Pure Thought Transference.

WILLIAM F. GOULD

111 Thingwall Park, Fishponds, Bristol.

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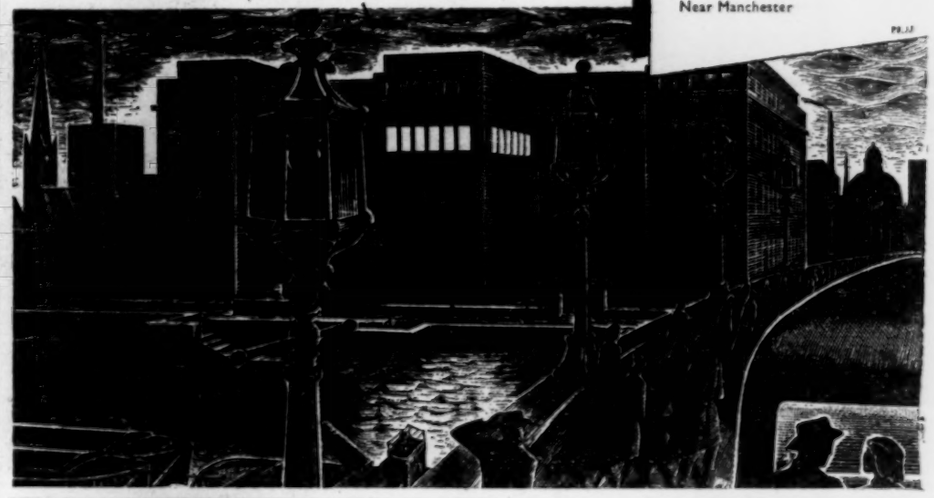

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE letters a man receives often tell us more about him than those he writes. This is not quite true of Keats, because he was exceptionally articulate and frank on all subjects which touched himself. His own letters are the key to his poetry and to his reasons for writing it, but the letters his friends wrote to each other concerning him* display aspects of his nature which he was too impatient, or too modest, to dwell upon. The interesting thing is that the long murmur and mutter of all these people will not add up to anything that could properly be described as a legend. Unlike Byron, Keats did not "cut a figure," because he was never interested in self-dramatisation. There is nothing exotic or glamorous about his personality, except its association with poetic genius. In his love of women, of friends and relations, Keats was astoundingly simple, straightforward—good. "The holiness of the heart's affections": the phrase moves us afresh every time we read it, because we feel behind it a nature unsullied by calculation. To a degree most uncommon among poets Keats was the natural man, unassailed by guilt. No one ever had to make allowances for him—except at the very end, when his courage and patience, exceeded at last by disease, were taken over, miraculously, by Joseph Severn.

But goodness, and a luminous intelligence, do not in themselves produce a poet. In Keats, as in Wordsworth and Shelley, the poetic faculty was set going by a vision of natural beauty as the sufficient revelation of truth. If Keats had reached maturity this conviction might not have sufficed to keep alive the lyrical impulse. We see that in Wordsworth it failed to do so. *The Triumph of Life*, on the other hand, indicates unmistakably that Shelley was at length passing safely out of adolescence. Keats's later poems give no comparable sign: the *Odes* are as enigmatic as the *Duino Elegies* of Rilke, and far less conclusive. They reveal a similar preoccupation with Death, as the means whereby the stuff of poetry is redeemed from Time; but in other ways they seem to represent an interim judgment—not, as in Rilke's case, a final one.

There is some discrepancy between Keats the man and the "poet's poet" of the *Odes*. His friends make it abundantly clear that, however much they admired the poet, they loved the man for a different set of reasons; and they use the word "love" advisedly, as did those who yielded to the spell of Nelson. The poet and the man of action meet in these two figures, both of them heroes. Thus the musical critic, Edward Holmes, replying to an enquiry from Monckton Milnes, in 1846, recalled that as a schoolboy Keats had impressed him by his "extraordinary vivacity" and his "*penchant* for fighting," but not by any attachment to books. One suspects that Milnes was surprised by this assertion, for these letters leave one with the impression that Keats was less profoundly appreciated by respectable, worldly persons like Milnes, Dilke, and Keats's publisher, John Taylor, than by bad hats like George Keats and John Hamilton Reynolds, or by the quiet ones—William Haslam, James Rice, Severn, Cowden Clarke. The truth seems to be that Keats took after his mother, the stabler's daughter, not only in beauty of face, but in her generous, sensual nature and her addiction to the pleasures of the table and the alcove.

These facts, communicated in shocked tones by John Taylor to Richard Woodhouse, have of course been quoted elsewhere, like many another passage in these letters, most of which have been pillaged by Keats's biographers. Mr. Rollins's volumes may appeal only to specialists, for they are purely scholarly and make no pretence to general readability; but it is as well to point out that the atmosphere of a circle such as this can be sensed only through a mass of repetitious detail, much of it apparently irrelevant. For example, the sneering attack on Keats in *Blackwood's* is a matter of notoriety, and so is the anger it aroused among the poet's friends. But until the publication of this book we were scarcely aware of the volume and vehemence of their indignation, or of its duration. They took the affair personally, like everything else to do with Keats. The event stands as an object lesson to journalists, for it seems improbable that Lockhart meant as much offence as was taken. It is a common experience among reviewers to find a deliberately abusive article received with silence, while some mildly censorious remark arouses a storm of rage.

In his introductory accounts of the people who figure in this book the editor is at pains to be objective, and on the whole he succeeds. Nevertheless personal feeling peeps out here and there. It seems to me that Mr. Rollins, pardonably exasperated by the labour of deciphering Benjamin Bailey's abominable script, is something less than just to a man who, though doubtless a bore, was evidently far from stupid. Charles Armitage Brown, again, is summed up as "a strange mixture of coarseness, kindliness, cold-bloodedness, and calculation." It is true that Brown stands rather apart from the rest of the circle, by reason of his temperament, which was that of a business man. There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of Brown's devotion to the poet, merely because, after the latter's death, he sent in a bill to George Keats for John's board and lodging during the time Brown had nursed him in his own house. This behaviour may seem insensitive, but it is scarcely "calculating," or even "cold-blooded," unless friendship be held to discharge all pecuniary obligation. In any case Brown had no cause to love George Keats, who was detested by the whole circle for his failure to pay his brother the money he owed him. Seen from London, where John was visibly dying, George's excuses were found specious and his protestations hypocritical; from Louisville, where he was struggling to make a living for himself and his family, the matter must have looked rather different—particularly as George was unaware of the gravity of his brother's situation. It is pleasant to reflect that his behaviour was subsequently vindicated—in the first instance by Fanny Brawne, who owned that George was "no favourite" of hers and that he "never liked" her.

Eventually, in 1848, Dilke made a full restitution, in a letter to Monckton Milnes:

> But poor George is, it appears, dead, and I am only the more anxious that the truth and the truth only should be told of him . . . I will express a wish that you would, some leisure morning, put down in black and white, John's known and unavoidable expenditure, and then tell me what was the *possible* 'remainder' in December 1819 or January 1820 from which George *could* have taken anything. I waive all the advantages that might be taken of your considerate suggestions about carelessness in money matters—Keats was neither careless nor careful but habitually *inexpensive*. Remember that John came of age in October 1816—Do his letters to Taylor about 'duns' and borrowings in May and July 1817 give hopes of a remainder in 1819, 20?

As for Fanny Brawne, George was not the only member of the circle who did not like her. Good-natured, flirtatious, probably not as intelligent as Mary Shelley but certainly more so than Sara Coleridge, Fanny Brawne shares the fate of the many women who have been dragged out of their depth by the obstinate idealism of poets. She should (so runs the indictment) have been kinder to Keats, and more understanding; she ought not to have made him miserable by receiving attentions from other men; above all, she should have gone with him to Italy. But this is to be wise after the event, and it attaches undue importance to Keats's wild assertion that if only he had been married to Fanny he might not have died. We are not entitled to assume any such thing, nor should we blame the girl for failure to be something which she never pretended to be. At least she was true to Keats's memory, never attempting to defend herself against the detractions of his family and friends. "What could he see in her?" The question is as old as humanity, and as idle. Mr. Rollins wisely suspends judgment on Fanny Brawne.

As we read, fascinated and torn with pity, the long and detailed account of Keats's last days, we cannot avoid concluding that although Severn could stick it out, Fanny would hardly have done so. For it is true only up to a certain point that (as Keats said in 1820) illness clarifies the mind. Past that point all is confusion—the dark night in which soul and body contend with one another, and the evil principle of despair seizes its opportunity. The poet who had written: "The roaring of the wind is my wife and the stars through the window are my children," could not but add, on a later occasion: "I never can feel certain of any truth but from a clear perception of its Beauty." Thus the mystique of nature was all that remained at the very end. One of Severn's letters to Taylor, written from Rome in January 1822, contains the following passage, revealing for the last time the dualism in Keats's nature:

> One morning early in February (before his death) I was delighted to find the spring had commenced here—and when the poor fellow awoke I told him of it—I told him I had seen some trees in blossom. This had a most dreadful effect on him—I had mistaken the point—he shed tears most bitterly and said—"The spring was always enchantment to me—I could get away from suffering in watching the growth of a little flower. It was real delight to me—it was part of my very soul—perhaps the only happiness I have had in this world—has been the silent growth of Flowers. Ah! why did you let me know this? Why show me that this comfort is gone—that I shall never see the spring again? I hoped to die before the spring came. O, I would to God that I were in my grave—quiet and insensible to these ghastly hands—these knobbed knees—the grave—with flowers on its top—send me to it now." On another occasion I remember it. In the ship when we were performing Quarantine it was proposed that the Sailors should sing us some songs to kill the time—two or three sung—coarsely and brutally enough—but I was astonished at the effect on Keats—he started up and said—"O, God! I doubt the immortality of my Soul—this grossness takes away my belief—I fall into a brute even to hear it. Why do I live if these are my fellow creatures?"

So strong—so natural, perhaps—is Manichæism to the idealist in every poet.

With the long and frightful struggle at last over, the king-pin is seen to have fallen out and the wrangling begins. The letters of those who had known Keats personally peter out in a diminishing chorus of mutual aspersion, mitigated by out-

* *The Keats Circle*. 1816-1878. Ed. Hyder Edward Rollins. 2 vols. *Oxford*. 70s.

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bursts of more generous feeling. All were at one in their efforts to prevent Charles Brown from publishing his memoir of the poet.

> "In truth" wrote Dilke angrily to Severn, "it is no Memoir of Keats, but a Memoir of Brown in his intercourse with Keats—or rather a dream on the subject. Why as to the soul-sympathy which united them at their first meeting, it was not till long after they had met, and met often, that Brown became even friendly and familiar with him . . . Brown figures here as a sort of munificent patron friend—an only friend indeed, except yourself. How is this? . . . Was not John Reynolds who knew him first and best, a friend? Facts needful to be told for the mere elucidation of the Poems. Were not the Brawnes his friends? Was not James Rice his friend? The impression left by this Memoir is altogether delusive."

Jealousy was rife on all hands, except among those who were not interested in personal prestige. Even Severn—a faithful friend if ever there was one—is shown behaving badly to Dilke about a commissioned picture. Only Monckton Milnes, secure in the dignity of his social position, remained *au dessus de la mêlée:* not for him the claim to have been Keats's greatest friend. The chairman of a difficult and rowdy committee, as it were, he cuts an admirably sane and judicious figure.

There is an adventitious interest in a book of this kind, for it collects widely dissimilar people into a single setting, as in a work of fiction; so that even where they contribute little or nothing fresh to our knowledge of Keats himself, these letters throw a steady light on the manners and ways of thought of the nineteenth century.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

DICKENS

Dickens: His Character, Comedy and Career. By HESKETH PEARSON. *Methuen.* 18*s.*

It was in 1932, in that essay itself innovatory for the time, with its comparisons between the Victorian novelist and Flaubert, Dostoevsky and Proust, that Sir Osbert Sitwell announced that a revaluation of Dickens was due. In the seventeen years that have passed since then, revaluation has gone on apace. Such books as Mr. Walter Dexter's *Mr. and Mrs. Dickens* and Miss Gladys Storey's *Dickens and Daughter*, together with the appearance in 1938 of the *Nonesuch Dickens*, with its store of hitherto-unpublished letters, made a new estimate of Dickens's character essential and inevitable, just as the criticism of Mr. George Orwell and Mr. Edmund Wilson has enforced upon their readers a new approach to Dickens the writer. Then Mr. Humphry House's *The Dickens World* related the novelist to the social and political values of his age. More recently, in *The Great Tradition*, Dr. Leavis has not only given us an entirely new estimate of the nature of *Hard Times* but has also, and perhaps more important, stressed as never before Dickens's unique command of word, phrase, rhythm and image, claiming that it is surpassed by that of no other English writer except Shakespeare. These revaluations, coming as they do from so many different points of view, have given us something very much like a new Dickens, and one had hoped that any fresh book on him would take them into account and bring them together. One had hoped this so strongly, indeed, that it is not perfectly easy to be fair to Mr. Hesketh Pearson's book. For of course Mr. Pearson has done nothing of the kind. He is concerned, as his publisher says, "to give us Dickens *the Man*." (But how can you separate a writer from his work? Are not a man's novels as much a part of him, when he is a great novelist, as the nose on his face, his delight in practical jokes, or his behaviour to his wife?) Within the limits he has set himself, which were to write a popular biography, Mr. Pearson has done his work well. He has assimilated the recently discovered biographical information, is livelier and more opinionated than Dame Una Pope-Hennessy (at times, too lively, too opinionated), but rather less detailed and much less well-documented. To anyone who wants the story of Dickens's life—and a fantastic enough story it is—Mr. Pearson's book can be recommended.

Recommended, that is, as long as the existence of such criticism as Mr. Orwell's, Mr. Wilson's and Dr. Leavis's is borne in mind. The traditional nineteenth-century attitude towards Dickens was very much that of Bagehot, who saw him as a sort of divine simpleton, an untutored *naif* of genius whose real, enduring work was in the earlier novels and whose later books were a pity: "We should not," wrote Bagehot, "like to have to speak in detail of Mr. Dickens's later works." Mr. Pearson, of course, has much more respect for Dickens than this, yet he, too, seems to think the later works rather a pity. Thus he writes that when Dickens "decided to abandon the picaresque type of work in which he excelled," "the unique portrayer of comical eccentrics had become a commonplace novelist"; and in this view he largely follows Gissing and Chesterton. But, when all praise has been given to the supreme greatness in their class of Pecksniff, Mrs. Gamp and the rest, there is much more to Dickens than simply the portrayer of comical eccentrics, and it is this much more that modern criticism has sought to emphasise. Just as much a part of him as his humour and his fine indignation are his abiding obsession with violence and his marvellous sense of symbolism. His was a nightmare universe; and if we are to look for affinities with him among other writers we shall find them in Dostoevsky rather than in Fielding or Smollett.

It is, of course, exactly these elements in Dickens, obvious in his novels, that are difficult to get into a biography, for they exist so much in the shadow-self of the man, which his public character—and Dickens was always a public character and saw himself as such, not least of all when his marriage broke up—could hardly allow to appear, even if he was conscious of it. But it seems to me that Mr. Pearson's limited conception of Dickens as an artist leads him astray in his conception of Dickens the man. As a human being Dickens was much more fantastic, much more overwhelmingly "Dickensian," than any character in his fiction, and one of the incidental delights of reading any biography of him is to observe how isolated examples of his behaviour might have come out of his novels. Where, except in the world of Dickens, would you find a father christening his sons with the preposterous names Alfred d'Orsay Tennyson, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Francis Jeffrey, Henry Fielding, Sydney Smith and Walter Landor? But since Mr. Pearson sees his hero primarily as the creator of great comic figures he fails to do justice to the morbid, obsessional Dickens, which was, one imagines, the creative Dickens. Mr. Pearson sub-titles his book *His Character, Comedy and Career*, but on the evidence of Dickens's life the word 'tragedy' could be substituted for 'comedy' with equal propriety. Mr. Pearson has his theory of Dickens: Dickens, he says, was a great character actor. This is true enough, and has always been recognised. But as stated by Mr. Pearson, it does not go nearly far enough as an explanation of Dickens. For Dickens received a measure of adulation, even of love, beyond the wildest dreams of the most popular film-star of today. This adulation, this love, was a necessity to him, and the necessity grew by what it fed on. His relationship with his public was positively symbiotic, and that it should be so was essential to the functioning of his genius. He craved an ever closer identity with his public. Hence the exhausting (and amazing) series of public readings, or rather public recitals of his works, for he wrote special versions of his books to be spoken and learned by heart, keeping himself going during his last tours on a diet of "a tumbler of new cream

with two tablespoonfuls of rum at seven in the morning, a sherry cobbler with a biscuit at twelve, a pint of champagne at three, an egg beaten up with a glass of sherry just before the reading, some strong hot beef tea between the pages of the reading, and soup with anything he felt like drinking after ten at night." Unquestionably, Dickens was a very great actor, and he had the additional advantage of being his own playwright; but—and this is the point—even very great actors do not as a rule kill themselves in the pursuit of their art, and Dickens did. He died of his own inordinate lust for love, and surely this, if anything is, was tragedy. For side by side with this craving for the love of millions, and the power which being loved confers, must be set his cold contempt for his mother, whom he hated for so eagerly thrusting him into the blacking-factory and guyed as Mrs. Nickleby, and the ambiguous and repetitive series of emotional relationships with women from Maria Beadnell to Ellen Ternan, who might, one suspects, had Dickens lived ten years longer, herself have shared Maria's fate and been cruelly immortalised in his fiction. Not that reductive analysis of a writer's life can ever explain his art; it can, however, throw light on the nature of his art. And the author who is going to write the book we are all waiting for on the character and work of the greatest imaginative genius who has written in English since Shakespeare will need, in addition to his own literary ability, sure judgment and intuitive understanding, all the help that contemporary criticism, historical studies and modern depth psychology can give him.

WALTER ALLEN

THE RUSSIANS—ARE THEY HUMAN?

Moscow Correspondent. By RALPH PARKER. *Muller.* 10s. 6d.

Having lived in Russia for eight years and mixed with Russians, rather than with foreigners, Mr. Parker makes in this book a successful attempt to explain how exactly Russians feel about Russia and the Soviet system. I do not agree with everything he says, or with the way in which he presents certain problems, but I would say that everybody in Britain who wishes to make any verbal or written pronouncement on Russia to-day would be well advised to read Parker first. Just as the Russians see the West to-day through a mist of allegedly scientific Marxist propaganda, so millions of people in the West have tended, more and more, to think of Russia—or rather, feel about Russia, to the exclusion of any thinking, entirely in terms of a few clichés like "salt mines," "NKVD," "Police State," and so on.

While dismissing these ugly sides of Russia rather too briefly, Mr. Parker, at the same time, produces any amount of evidence to show that tens of millions of Russians to-day are healthier, more educated, more politically-conscious, and even better housed than their parents were under the Tsarist regime, and that their sense of equal opportunity is something for which they are particularly grateful to the present system. In the army, in industry, in the government, the highest posts are held by men of what used to be called humble birth. Also, the people have evolved a Soviet "way of life," which they like.

The war, as Mr. Parker points out, was the supreme test for the regime; and the only people who ratted on Moscow *en masse* were the newly incorporated Balts, and some of the more backward and most "un-Soviet-conscious" peoples like the Chechens in the Caucasus and the Crimean Tartars; but all the Russians, and the bulk of the Ukrainians, as well as nearly all the other nationalities of the Union remained loyal. The fact that there are a few thousand or even hundred thousand D.P.s does not substantially alter this fact.

Yet to all these people who defended Soviet Russia, the war years—especially '41 and '42—were a hell of hardships and privations.

> During the war years, in mid-winter, I would walk at night through the streets of central Moscow. An eerie silence brooded over the blacked-out city. But there was always a sound accompanying the shrill squeak of my boots in the frozen snow; it was the sound of the thudding crowbars which women, bundled up in quilted jackets, plied all night against the caked ice of the streets—a job as lonely and, with temperatures below zero Fahrenheit, as taxing as sentry work at the Front.

Although, after the war, the Russians would have preferred to take it easy for a year or two, they had enough confidence in the government's judgment to comply with the pressing demand that they start on reconstruction rightaway.

The bulk of *Moscow Correspondent* is concerned with this process of reconstruction—in industry, in agriculture, in the health services, and in education—and parallel with this remarkable story runs Mr. Parker's equally valuable account of the mental processes through which the Russian people have gone since the war. The first two post-war years were the hardest of all; and the difficulties were greatly increased by the 1946 drought, especially as, even during that "hungry" year, the government still found it imperative to export large quantities of food abroad. International, as well as domestic considerations made it vitally important to make the 1947 harvest a success, and Mr. Parker's story of "the battle of the harvest" explains admirably how, despite the shortage of equipment from which farms were then still suffering, the efficiency of Soviet agriculture was increased by the partial application of certain industrial labour techniques to collective farming. What also took place was a partial "militarisation" of the farms, complete with the introduction of quasi-military honours and awards. In addition to this, measures were taken to reduce the latent hostility between town and country, and to increase the peasants'—particularly the Ukrainian peasants'—"Soviet-consciousness"; chief among these methods was the establishment of a dense network of Communist Party cells throughout the countryside—cells run, not by outsiders, but by peasants, boys back from the war, who, while in the Army, had joined the Party ranks. To millions of peasants the army had been a school of Communist citizenship. Later, after the currency reform, a new incentive was offered to the peasantry in the form of an increased flow of consumer goods to the countryside.

This is one example in many of how Mr. Parker describes—largely in human terms—what has really been happening in Russia since the war. He also tells how the Red Army was demobilised and how millions of men were helped to adapt themselves to civilian life as quickly as possible (indeed, remarkably quickly); further, he explains (quite correctly, in my opinion) the only limited effect on Russian soldiers of their "contact with Western civilisation"; then he tells us how a gigantic steel mill like that of Zaporozhie, completely razed to the ground by the Germans, was reconstructed—not so much through working-class enthusiasm of the 1930 variety as through an extraordinary effort of highly technical industrial co-ordination on a national scale and at all levels, which is typical of Russia's technical advance in the last ten years.

In his chapter "How Moscow Lives," Mr. Parker provides a close-up view of life in a students' hostel, with all its hardship and optimism, and of the lives of dozens of various Soviet rank-and-file citizens—complete with details of their family budgets, and descriptions of their devotion to duty, their virtues, their failings, their tastes, their humour, their friendships and hatreds.

> The Soviet doctor is not only respected, he is a much loved character; perhaps because through him the state shows the kindliest aspect of its face. Perhaps it is also because the doctor frequently sides with the patient in disputes with various organisations over questions of grants in money or kind, housing conditions, or holidays. His reputation for self-sacrificing work and a humane approach . . . is well-deserved.

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everyday Russian life, could have written these passages about the Russian medical profession.

His book is not all eulogy; even the passage I have just quoted suggests that the doctor has often to contend with the insensitiveness and the little-tin-god attitude of hide-bound bureaucrats. Not everybody in Russia is a model citizen—far from it; yet, by and large, the system has worked, and what Mr. Parker stresses is the remarkable optimism of the Soviet people, their sense of team-work, and those feelings of personal pride and self-discipline—a quality which, especially among party members, almost borders on puritanism. That high-up Communists often suffer from an excess of self-righteousness is true enough, but none—so unlike the Nazi or Fascist pundits—could ever be called a racketeer or a *nouveau riche*.

An important point Parker makes concerns standards of comparison. The mistake many foreign commentators on Russia make is to compare the real wages of a Russian worker with those of his opposite number in America. But that is not how the Russians look at it and foreign broadcasts, based on such comparisons, cut little ice, and merely irritate. The Russian worker does not compare his condition with that of a foreigner; he compares it with what his own condition was under the Tsars, or ten, five or two years ago; and what impresses him is that the improvement has been *constant* (except for the war). Nor has he failed to be impressed by the argument that, under the Soviet economic system, there can be neither over-production nor unemployment. As Parker also rightly remarks, it would often be fairer to compare conditions in Russia with those in Turkey or Persia; one would then soon see that Soviet Armenia and Soviet Azerbaijan have a cleanliness, a human dignity and a standard of living which compare most favourably with the squalor of Turkish Armenia or Persian Azerbaijan. It is true that housing remains, especially in a place like Moscow, extremely bad, and one is not altogether convinced by Mr. Parker's argument that, but for the war, housing in Moscow to-day would be well-nigh perfect. Alexei Tolstoy once told me: "We have so many children that our towns will *always* look a mess."

Nor is Mr. Parker's attempt to justify the present anti-foreign propaganda very convincing; what he says is that "the others" really started the mud-slinging and that, in any case, the main purpose of this propaganda is to give Russians greater self-confidence in their work. One also feels that, at heart, Mr. Parker is extremely uncomfortable about a number of other aspects of present-day Russia—notably the Party Line on literature and art:

> The lowering of levels is a natural result and, one may hope, of temporary duration, of the immense broadening of the educated public due to the widespread introduction of secondary education. The schoolroom is no place for sophistication...

I don't find this quite reassuring enough.

As for the other "black spots," of which the West has been hearing so much all these years, Mr. Parker thinks that:

> there are many signs that, as the Soviet Union consolidates its position in the framework of the nations, the "black spots" will lose their significance in the general picture. There is another Russia than that of the purges, the deportations, and the secret police.

A point he stresses at the same time is that since the war there has been no Fifth Column problem comparable to that of the late Thirties, and that, in the agricultural "purge" of 1947, reprimands were numerous, but arrests very few. He does not, however, openly challenge the principle of "administrative" arrests, even though it would seem that the Soviet regime could to-day well afford to abandon this unworthy practice.

As distinct from most writers on Russia, Mr. Parker tries to see the best rather than the worst side of everything; and therefore he tends to tell us more about the life of an "average" worker, who earns 800 roubles, than about the unfortunate office-cleaner who earns only 250. Even so, *Moscow Correspondent* still strikes me as the most intelligent and best-informed book we have had on post-war Russia up till now. It deserves to be widely read; for unless one assumes that war with Russia is inevitable and that she should simply be destroyed, it is surely better that the West should try to understand what sort of people they really are—these Russians with whom, for better or for worse, we shall go on sharing this little planet.

ALEXANDER WERTH

NEW NOVELS

The King and the Queen. By RAMON J. SENDER. *Grey Walls Press.* 9s. 6d.

The Miracle at Cardenrigg. By TOM HANLIN. *Gollancz.* 9s.

The Margin. By J. D. SCOTT. *Pilot Press.* 8s. 6d.

Pemberley Shades. By D. A. BONAVIA-HUNT. *Wingate.* 9s. 6d.

A Scottish coal-mine and a palace outside Madrid during the first weeks of the Civil War are the settings of *The Miracle of Cardenrigg* and *The King and the Queen*, and two novels could hardly be less alike. Yet, in writing them, both Señor Sender and Mr. Hanlin have brought "imagination" to material which a few years ago would have been treated with the full honours of political consciousness. Señor Sender, who now lives in America, has used the Civil War setting for most of his novels, and has written squarely from the Republican point of view; now, however, he writes with little indication as to which side he supports, has returned to the novelist's proper job of writing about people, not parties, and in doing so has discovered himself as a writer. *The King and the Queen* can really be called "imaginative literature," and that is praise.

When the Republicans take over her palace a beautiful duchess takes refuge in the palace-tower, while the gardener, Rómulo, who has once seen her naked in the swimming-pool (and has heard her laugh it off with "a gardener is not a man") brings her food. That is the central situation, and from it grows the obsessive love of the gardener for the duchess, the reversal of power, the seduction and the death of the duchess. The fable is good, but a fable is pointless unless it has some kind of symbolism, and, though Sender's meaning is certainly not obvious, I take Rómulo to be a symbol of the sexual, and perhaps social, ambition of man. The duchess is fond of reading a book in which occurs the passage "Man is king. The queen is man's illusion. Together the two of them form the monarchy that rules over the universe," but Rómulo and the duchess form no monarchy, their liaison is the result of dissolution, *ordonnance* is gone, and their lives are as unreal as that of the dwarf who, afraid of a beating from the Republicans, degenerates in the cellars of the palace, waging a continuous war on the rats. He is as horrifying as the carp-eating nobleman of *After Many a Summer*. Señor Sender's last novel *Dark Wedding* marked the beginning of his complete maturity; *The King and the Queen* shows no retrenchment.

In *The Miracle at Cardenrigg* Mr. Hanlin, too, has attempted to combine the imaginative with the realistic. He is well to the fore of the new generation of proletarian writers, and had he been writing during the Thirties his novel would certainly have been conceived differently. The mining disaster, with men trapped in a gallery surrounded by slowly-rising water, would never have been linked with religion—with a Catholic girl praying at the pit-head, and giving her life, so that, by a seeming miracle, the men may be saved. The old social realism of the proletarian writers of the Thirties—and of hon. mems. like Dr. Cronin—hasn't been able to thrive in the Welfare State, and Mr. Hanlin points no political moral, seems quite amicable towards the mine-bosses, and

allows one of his characters to lose £20 at the dog-track without feeling it too much. This new approach is refreshing but it brings the proletarian novel more into line with the novel pure and simple; when its intentions were not primarily artistic but documentary it wasn't difficult to overlook gaucheness, but Mr. Hanlin's kind of novelist must now contend with formal problems which used not to concern him. Mr. Hanlin himself may be accused of a little gaucheness, especially when he's being mystical. "Go home, Maria Kennedy," says a disembodied voice to the Catholic girl:

> You have nothing but a pitiful little dream in your head. Self-sacrifice is suicide. There will be no reward for your piety, no reward for your faith or your courage . . . your bones will crumble into dust, and the dust will vanish in the consummation of the world, and the darkness will come—darkness and nothingness forever. The world is all: the flesh is all: the moment is all . . .

The passage continues in this manner, but one is not convinced, and at the end of the book there is a doubt about the inevitability of the religious theme, it all seems rather *voulu*. Mr. Hanlin is at his best when describing the men in the blocked gallery, in the telephone conversation between one of the men and his girl at the pit-head—telling her that the watch he bought her really cost five and not thirty shillings. And he has managed a carefully built-up feeling of suspense which in another novel would have been admirable; but here, since we are constantly told that the men will be saved, the suspense loses point. For all its faults, however, *The Miracle at Cardenrigg* has attempted something and Mr. Hanlin has a talent to be watched.

Unlike these two novels *The Margin* is completely naturalistic, contemporary in a good sense of that imprecise word. Mr. Scott's worlds—he is concerned with the inter-relationship of some of the plurality of worlds which add up to "the middle class"—are instantly recognisable; Soho restaurants, government offices, the Academy cinema, a factory on the Great North Road. There is hardly a paragraph which does not contain some illuminating touch of human observation, and all the characters are in the round, observed with exactness and placed in their social background in a way which shows Mr. Scott to be a social novelist of great promise. Here he is mainly dealing with the contrasted worlds of the films and the Civil Service, his principal character, a woman civil servant, being in love with a film director. But they are not extremists in their worlds; they see the faults of each and live in fear of gradually drifting from their detached position "in the margin" towards extremism. The extremism is symbolised in the Civil Service by a type of pragmatic tyrant with whom all who have worked in a government office will be familiar; and in the film world by a spoilt and vulgar-minded producer. Mr. Scott dislikes magnificently—and dislikes the right people—but he doesn't present his lovers as faultless; they are completely human, the natural mind before it has been de-hydrated by an inhuman system. The system may be anything, but the Civil Service lends itself well to the purpose. Mr. Scott never attempts to satirise it but he has achieved a denunciatory truth which is rare in satire. Mr. Balchin's Minister in *The Small Back Room* now fades from my mind; Mr. Scott's is the real thing.

Miss Bonavia-Hunt is a brave woman; in *Pemberley Shades* she has written a story about Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet three years after their marriage. Such doings may be allowed among Janeites on Sunday evenings (or in competitions in literary weeklies) but to *publish* 80,000 words of such a thing! Miss Bonavia-Hunt is a Quisling-Janeite—she will be forbidden in perpetuity the threshold of the Chawton Museum, and Dr. Chapman is no doubt already preparing an admonitory footnote. But in truth she has written a charming story in semi-pastiche, though it lacks all the qualities we cherish in Jane Austen.

MICHAEL SWAN

REPORTER OVER THE STYX

Emanuel Swedenborg: Scientist and Mystic. By SIGNE TOKSVIG. *Faber*. 30*s*.

At the age of fifty-six Emanuel Swedenborg was an outstanding man of science and engineer. Although not a nobleman, he had forced himself on to the exclusive Royal Board of Mines, which supervised the whole of Sweden's mining industry. His work there led him into researches in geology and forest conservation; he explored the extraction and utilization of sulphur. But his interests were not confined to fields directly related to mining. Stimulated by his first visit to London in 1712, where he had met the leading scientists of the day, he planned a one-man submarine, devised new lock gates for canals and invented various pumps and syphons for direct industrial application. From physics his interests took him to anatomy, from anatomy to Platonic metaphysics, no impossible step in an age when the limits of experimental science were unmapped. "Only from a knowledge of the soul and the mechanism of the body can we deduce that there is a God and a creator," he wrote, "but if we postulate the soul as something most unknowable and secret and something far removed from sense, this is the nearest road to atheism." The direction of his future thought was fixed even before his great vision on the night of April 6/7, 1744, in his fifty-seventh year: he would provide scientific proof of the truths of religion.

From that night at Delft his interests were almost entirely given to other-worldly matters. His colleagues on the Board of Mines, however, noticed nothing amiss, and only reluctantly accepted his resignation. But he had decided to go abroad and devote the rest of his life to the publication of his findings in what we should today call the parapsychological field. Despite his vision he remained to the end of his days an investigator rather than a mystic, describing his traffic with the other world in terms of verifiable experiment rather than as a personal vision. He made no messianic claims. When questioned towards the end of his life as to the number of his followers, he admitted that he did not know of many; perhaps there were fifty—and about the same number in the world of spirits.

It is at this point that the question of his sanity arises. If we can agree with the various psychoanalysts who have studied his case, and dismiss him as a psychotic, none of his claims need be taken as more than fantasy. Here, however, parapsychology has something to say, first by examining several well-authenticated stories of Swedenborg's clairvoyance. He was for instance, able to inform the widow of the Dutch Ambassador in Stockholm of the place where her dead husband had concealed a particularly important receipt; he conveyed a message to the Swedish queen from her late brother, which could have originated from no other mind but the dead Prussian prince's. But Swedenborg was more circumstantial still: he described a state of limbo in which the dead existed, a state in which they succeeded in creating for themselves the illusion of being still alive. He described changes in marriage partners, beyond the grave. He described in fact a whole fantastic world that has an embarrassing plausibility about it. But he never abandoned his scientific method: he treated the spirits with whom he consorted in the same spirit of civilized detachment that Swift applied to the inhabitants of Laputa.

Miss Toksvig makes no attempt to draw a line of credibility and tell us how much we must believe. Her very remarkable achievement is to give us a first-rate account of Swedenborg's life, to expound in patient detail his metaphysical statements, and to examine them in the light of contemporary knowledge. The picture we get is of a man with supernormal faculties whose very considerable powers of self-criticism were utterly insufficient for the task he had undertaken. He was, like his purely scientific contemporaries, an explorer and an improviser: set methods and standard apparatus did not exist. But his explor-

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ations reached into territory where a single mind was powerless. Hence the amazing mixture of sense and nonsense that Swedenborg left behind.

J. M. COHEN

DAMAGED ARCHANGEL

Ruskin: The Great Victorian. By DERRICK LEON. *Routledge.* 30*s.*

Being supercilious about the great Victorians has always struck me as a tiresome kind of oblique self-praise. And as a biographical convention it was stupid, in the long run. The finest Lives are not produced by debunking, nor does it make for honesty, but for deceit on a lower level. But from the victim's point of view, it had some advantages. While all the giant race before the flood were marked down for ridicule, one could easily believe that one loved them all. Now that they are getting fair play, the illusion is dispelled at once. Unowned repulsions lift their heads; and if the most laborious advocate, in a monumental study, can't do away with them, his client is, subjectively speaking, finished.

I returned to Ruskin with a great effort: with almost uncontrollable distaste. Not exactly prejudice. He was undoubtedly a giant, and at his best he wrote like an angel. His aesthetic theory, however one-sided, puritanical, hectoring in tone—pseudo-scientific, yet unable to preserve him from first-class blunders—at least has some affinity with great art. I often think one should ask no more; certainly the current styles achieve much less—yet are still offered at the pistol-point. The same is true, and even clearer, of his appreciation. "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat"—in this sphere at least; an interpreter of beauty ought to make one feel it has nourished him. Our present fashionable guides are apt to be rather bony. And if wrong, they are entirely useless, while a Ruskin is always valuable. "Who," asked Charlotte Bronte, "could read these glowing descriptions of Turner's works without longing to see them?" Again, I question if the critic need attempt more; if we have already seen them, he should make us long to see them again. Of course Charlotte, in addition, took it for granted that the interpreter was right. "She felt now as if she had been walking blindfold. This book seemed to give her eyes." But say he was wrong (if we may assume a right and wrong, which indeed in practice is unavoidable). Perhaps the beauties he revealed to her were not really there; in after life, he was inclined to doubt it. Yet even so, the revelation was authentic. She had had a true vision, a profound experience of art. Even if the art was Ruskin's, the fact remains.

His social writings have the same faults as his aesthetic; but their virtues need not be enlarged upon. They have made their way—with the strong assistance of the *Zeitgeist*, which perhaps they helped to create. Indeed Ruskin the reformer has had slightly more than his due. In this field, he was a disciple of Carlyle's, and a kindred spirit. Like Carlyle, he justified slavery—enforcing his arguments with "You're another," which was possibly true, but certainly beside the point. Like Carlyle, he had a fondness for the dictator-principle. ("The first duty of every man in the world is to find his true master, and, for his own good, submit to him, and to find his true inferior, and, for that inferior's good, conquer him." And so on.) But public memory has made a neat division of their views, bestowing the whole dictator-streak on Carlyle—because to him that hath shall be given—and leaving Ruskin the social conscience and prophetic enlightenment.

Still, it is nothing he believed that makes him so hard to face; it is a fundamental shrinking. The mind comes back—precisely like the hand of Shaw's heroine, who was going to touch a mouse. She was not "against" the mouse, she just couldn't touch it. And so with Ruskin as a personality. He makes one feel shy; while not condemning, one would rather not look at him.

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It has no alliance with the graces. It would scarcely have been well written, even had the author (who died in 1944) revised it himself. Nor is it well designed, it simply piles up. But the accumulation is impressive, and even admirable. If there is any evidence for Ruskin as an out-and-out fellow-creature, here it must be found.

And there is *some*, of course. First of all, one is obliged to realise that nobody shrank from him in real life. On the contrary, he was beloved—as he himself never ceased to mention. And at moments one can see why. He had, distinctly, a pathetic side; as a friend and benefactor, he could be endearing as well as noble. That Proust, Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi all revered him is doubtful testimony; one can't help thinking: They were foreigners, perhaps they didn't quite get the flavour. But so much personal affection, with the fact that many who knew his work were agreeably surprised on meeting him, is not to be explained away. He really was lovable.

One must admit this attractive side; but to perceive it, except in flashes, is another thing. And in the central chambers of his life, it does not appear at all. In those the monster has his lair, and the scent of freakishness becomes overpowering. Derrick Leon disguises it as best he can, and rather more than he should—the first impression of him, as a champion but a wholly honest one, has to be modified in places. It is a weariness to speak of Effie Gray; but Ruskin's marriage throws so much light on him, and is such a test of the biographer, that one can't avoid it. And on this subject, Derrick Leon must be called disingenuous. His manipulations are discreet. They are a matter of emphasis, judicious quotation, or obscuring generalities—whichever will put his hero in the best light; till Ruskin finally, though still obliquely, is being described as the injured person. His apologist had not, indeed, seen the letters published by Sir William James. But from

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what he knew already, it is clear they would not have taught him much.

Besides, they actually afford some excuse for Ruskin, by making Effie so dislikeable out of her own mouth. But really no excuse will do. The sexual side is the least of it; there, his unconsciousness of wrong may very well be passed over as invincible ignorance. What shocks one is the want of feeling. When his dearest Effie turned out a bore, he condemned her icily to non-existence; when she *would* exist and be a nuisance, his ferocity was unbounded. Yet then and ever afterwards, he thought himself irreproachable.

No doubt his parents were to blame. They had deformed him for life; and it is from this deformity, this lack of judgment, this emotional wrongness that one shies away. In Effie's spiteful but sufficient words, he is "most unnatural." There need not be a moral issue; his love-letters and endearments are as shocking as his self-righteousness. The whole affair of Rose La Touche makes one squirm; and his ravings about it are so worse than mad, so deadly embarrassing, that it is odd they should be quoted here at such length. The taint of wrongness finds its way nearly everywhere; for me, it even spoils *Praeterita*. Only in the contemplation and the rendering of external beauty could he lose himself and it. And so, after all, it may be the notorious "purple passages" that wear best. K. JOHN

A STUDY OF MACBETH

The Time is Free. By ROY WALKER. *Andrew Dakers.* 8s. 6d.

The minute examination of individual plays in full-length volumes, which has been one of the marked features of Shakespearean criticism in the years since the war, has its dangers. Repetition and unnecessary accumulation of detail is one of them, and the customary losing of the wood in the trees is another. But Mr. Walker's exhaustive scene-by-scene examination of *Macbeth* is more concerned with understanding Shakespeare than with substantiating the critic's own theories and so escapes much of the tediousness that weakens some of his contemporaries. Moreover, and this is equally important, the author has a keen sense of dramatic structure and a sensitive understanding of the formal beauty of the play, so that he continually refers his conclusions to the test of dramatic fitness or function.

The effects of such an approach and of such a method of study can be traced throughout the work. They influence his judgments on the underlying thought, on the technique, on the interpretation of obscure lines and even on the authenticity of doubtful passages.

By means of his constant effort to apprehend the meaning of the play, in detail and as a whole, Mr. Walker (who seems to have an astonishing amount of it not merely by heart, but, what is more difficult, simultaneously present to his imagination) arrives at the conclusion that *Macbeth* is a Christian Tragedy. There is here, he declares, a "deliberate and sustained harmony of medieval Christian doctrine, or rather of the spiritual experiences of which the doctrine is an imperfect rationalization." This is no idle conjecture, still less a deliberate paradox. It is a conviction supported again and again by passages thick-set with images reminiscent of the Bible or with quotations and references. Some of these have long been recognised, but many of them Mr. Walker notes for the first time. And the evidence he assembles makes us consider seriously the contention it supports. His familiarity, not only with Shakespeare's poetry (especially with that of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*) but also with the three earlier translations of the Bible, enables him to detect and reveal harmonies that would escape a more casual reader or one less fully qualified for his task. Whether we agree or not with this interpretation of Shakespeare's underlying thought, Mr. Walker's argument sends us back to the play to reconsider both.

The same process guides him well in a totally different field, in assessing the authenticity of disputed passages. Here again his deep and simultaneous awareness of the play both in its detail and in its total effect enables him to apply to these passages a decisive test which is too often neglected, that of their function in a work of dramatic art. Some illuminating criticism and some acute and convincing pieces of argument are to be found in these parts of his investigation, leading him to assign to Shakespeare's hand, on grounds of structural or psychological relevance, all those parts of the play which have from time to time been disputed, except the notorious passages in which Hecate appears. This means that he re-instates not only the macabre scenes with the witches on the heath (which few of us would deny to Shakespeare), but also the sergeant's report of Macbeth's victory in the second scene and the long debate between Malcolm and Macduff in the fourth act. We often find the first of these dismissed for its un-Shakespearean style and the second for its structural irrelevance, but Mr. Walker demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the conservative textual critic, that both scenes are living and organic parts of the action.

No one whose fate it has been to read all the full-length volumes devoted during the last three or four years to the study of individual plays would suggest that this new method is unfruitful. Many of its findings are valuable, and a synthesis of them all may some day be more valuable still. But, as I have said, it has its dangers. And though the discipline of his manifest devotion brings Mr. Walker through, where some of his contemporaries stray into unattached theorising or the compilation of unclassified observations, he does not always escape.

The discovery of symbolic meanings in certain passages, to which his strong sense of pattern perhaps renders him susceptible, sometimes leads him on to debatable ground. We might be

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willing to accept the identification of the Third Murderer and Hecate with the spiritual presences of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, if the author would allow us to take these implications as overtones, as secondary possibilities among many simultaneous meanings. But in drama, and above all in Shakespeare's drama, the primary meanings must be the basic, human ones; it is in these terms that the plays must first be apprehended. Any interpretation which seeks to supersede these by the symbolic arouses misgivings. Mr. Walker is not unaware of this and says plainly that "Shakespeare's symbolism is not fashioned at the expense of character," but there are moments in his book when he himself seems partly to forget his own statement. Another weakness, which again derives from his peculiar strength, is his preoccupation with those echoes of Shakespeare's poetry, with which his mind is so deeply saturated. There is now and again a danger of his drifting into a riddling play with quotations, a constant repetition, which, though it has a power like that of incantation to establish a rhythm and reveal a pattern, seems sometimes to go beyond its own intentions and defeat its own effect. But the book is a genuine attempt at analysis and re-synthesis of one of the most important plays in the canon, and though it is unlikely that many of us will accept it without dispute, few of us will read it without reflexion.

UNA ELLIS-FERMOR

ORDER AND FAILURE

Visions from Piers Plowman. Taken from the Poem of William Langland, and Translated into Modern English by Nevill Coghill. *Phoenix House.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

When I first read *Piers Plowman*, many years ago, as a set book at a Scottish university, I found it a sad, plodding, shapeless poem. I knew little about history, and less about life; I thought I knew something about the art of writing, and it seemed to me that Langland's way of writing, of never saying what he had to say neatly and finally, but of always going on to repeat and vary it, changing his mind from time to time about what it was, could lead only to a trailing inconclusiveness. I was too young to recognise in this perpetual recapitulation the normal process of our moral and intellectual growth. I had also in my head a common romantic notion of the Middle Ages as a time when an ideal order expressed itself in gracious living. Langland upset this notion. He showed me the ideal order pretty constantly breaking down in practice, and for the ordinary depressing reasons, because men were too lazy or greedy or ambitious or sensual to follow their best lights when that took trouble or did not pay. And he seemed in a muddle himself about what the ideal order was; sometimes he would think of it as strict justice, at other times as uncovenanted mercies. He would grumble that the justice was too strict; but then, when he saw friars hawking round the mercies to successful sinners, he would cry for the justice again. One wanted him to take sides, and he would not. He would reproach the fat farmers who were harsh to poor labourers; and then he would add that many of the poor labourers were a cadging lot, who got above themselves when wages were good, and shirked steady work. All this was too strong meat for a young man's stomach. It is only as one grows older that one recognises that Langland's dreariness is his greatness. Life is like that. One can never sit back and say, "Now the world is in order, and so is my view of it." Everything has always to be begun again. Langland knew it, and went on trudging after his vision.

Langland's vocabulary is easier than Chaucer's and one can often get the meaning of a novel word from its setting, without turning to the glossary. Nevertheless, Mr. Coghill's admirable version was worth doing, simply because the ordinary reader is not likely to turn to Skeat's edition, and because Langland's great poem ought to be part of the common heritage. Also, while it is impossible to translate, say, Dunbar or Henryson without either ruining their metres or in effect writing a new poem, Langland's long, slack alliterative line permits the substitution of, say, "illiterate" for "lewd" without any real jar. There are periodic attempts to revive this alliterative line, by academic enthusiasts like Mr. C. S. Lewis and by virtuosos like Mr. Auden. I do not think these are well-advised. One can isolate occasional striking single lines and passages,

Dukes of this dim place, at once undo your gates,

but, on the whole, it would be hard to prove that Langland was a great poet by detached quotations. It is a mistake to read him, as we read Latin poetry or English poetry since the Renaissance, looking for memorable bits, flashing concentrations of phrase. His alliterative line keeps him carrying steadily along, but it does not enable him to vary his tone, his pace, and the density of his statements, and so work up to effective climaxes; his poem is of one texture all through, homespun but honest. Langland's poetic greatness lies not in his method but in his narrow staunchness and confused sincerity, in what he sees and says. Mr. Coghill has tactfully cut most of the duller expository passages.

Mr. Coghill's excellent preface and appendices give the general reader all the help he needs to find his way about the poem. The illustrations, from Blake and Palmer, are wonderfully in keeping with the spirit of the text; they express a vision that has been granted at long intervals to few men of genius in our tradition (Bunyan, perhaps Whitman, are others), whose outward life has had the common drabness of their time, and who have lacked worldly ambition. It is a vision of holy order not set apart from, but springing out of, the ordinary failures of men.

G. S. FRASER

HOMAGE TO AICHHORN

Searchlights on Delinquency. By K. R. EISSLER and Others. *Imago Publishing Company.* 30*s.*

This book is a symposium of new psycho-analytic studies by thirty-six authors, dedicated to August Aichhorn on his 70th birthday "to give Aichhorn the satisfaction that his work has ripened in science and practice everywhere, and secondly to expand and enhance . . . the popularity of his work." There is a four-page biographical note about Aichhorn by the Editor which gives at least an inkling of why this great educator of "Wayward Youth," who found in the psycho-analytic method the tool he had long sought, has so many distinguished and devoted disciples in America, Europe and Asia. It is good to see physicians doing homage to a teacher. One would have liked more about Aichhorn from Dr. Eissler's pen, for it is a stimulating and heroic story.

The rest of the book, though grouped into seven sections—General Problems, Clinical Problems, Technique and Therapy, Etiology and Development, Social Psychology, Penology and Surveys—neither has nor claims consistency. Those who are apt to regard Freudianism as another religion like Marxist Communism, allowing no deviationists, will be surprised and glad to find so many conflicting opinions in this collection. We are, for instance, referred back in one essay from the Oedipus conflict to an older primal crime of matricide committed by the brothers of the horde to free themselves from the tyranny of the primordial woman. To the unlearned it seems to be anybody's guess.

Everybody who can take, honestly and with a sense of proportion, the whole business of the relationship between the criminal and society which rejects him will enjoy Dr. Paul Bergman's imagined text of a lecture given by a scientist to a group of organised criminals on "The objectivity of Criminological Science." With a deft touch under the ribs he startles biologists intent on genes and endocrine glands, sociologists intent on frustration by poverty, psychologists (and psycho-analysts themselves) intent on such things as "unconscious needs for punishment" and "poor development towards the reality

principle." He suggests that each in his own way patronises or belittles the criminal, and violates, as Aichhorn never did, the principle of "respect for the values of the delinquent's personality." The essay is a good joke—with a cutting edge. Strategically it might have been better placed at the beginning of the book, as a warning, or at the end as a consolation, instead of in the middle of the technical essays.

The book is rather hard going for the uninitiated general reader. It is inevitably full of psychologists' jargon, which is doubtless known and understood by many readers of the NEW STATESMAN, but is baffling to others who may yet be sufficiently intelligent and abreast of modern thought to grasp the essentials of Aichhorn's philosophy and technique. As it was largely made in the U.S.A. there is yet another jargon, unfortunately more familiar. So we read in "The Phenomenon of Contagion and 'Shock Effect' in Group Therapy" that contagion of one clown's behaviour is greater in a "detention home with a chow line and long table" than in one with small tables, and "in a huge dormitory than . . . from one four-kid room to another."

The unsympathetic will, as usual, argue that what is wanted is more Christianity or common sense not more science; though they will probably be found refusing to act on those same Christian or common-sense considerations when faced with the problem of a persistent thief or the latest figures of juvenile delinquency. Dr. Schmideberg's accounts of her "tough guy" patients are a useful corrective to those who despair of "incorrigibles." Her case would be stronger if she had described some of her failures, and if she had not told us that an English girl of 24 had committed thousands of offences. Who did the counting?

But everyone will be stimulated by the keenness and disciplined scientific attitude of these psycho-therapists in dealing with the interesting but exasperating patients from whose cases they have themselves learnt so much. To each reader his choice out of the thirty-six psycho-therapists, if he should act out his repressed impulses and so rank as "delinquent." This reviewer would opt for Dr. Adelaide Johnson of Chicago, who under the forbidding title of "Sanctions for Super-ego Lacunae" gives a vivid picture of the technique of a thoughtful, imaginative physician practising psycho-therapy without conscious patience (which Aichhorn pronounced a sign of failure), without unconscious patronage, eschewing blame and yet maintaining that incorruptibility which refuses to let a delinquent "get by" with any falsehood or dishonesty, however small. Here one recognises the way of truth whereby delinquent children and their parents may learn to sort out the tangled skeins of their lives.

CICELY M. CRAVEN

New Ways of Building. Edited by ERIC DE MARÉ. *Architectural Press.* 30*s.*

Mr. de Maré has produced a technical publication of a high order; there are great difficulties in organising the mass of information which he offers to the reader. He has chosen to deal primarily with each of the more important groups of materials, rather than with structural function or processes of manufacture. Within its limitations this method has provided him with a working editorial scheme. Finally, however, he had to admit its failure by including a special article on insulation. *New Ways of Building* is intended as a guide for the architect already in practice, and as a supplement to the more conventional book on building method. As it stands, it is rather a handbook to the use of the materials with which it deals. In each article there is a fund of general information on new methods and current experiment, while the reader is expected to make extensive use of the admirable bibliographies should he wish to investigate detail or make direct application in practice. Mr. de Maré has, by the very nature of his scheme, been unable to deal with an important aspect of new structural theory on the Continent; especially with the development of integral structural systems and functional, rather than structural, differentiations; such a division would finally have been more satisfactory, while presenting him with a much more complex editorial problem. There are, of course, details at which one could carp; but few errors of judgment occur when one compares this publication with other technical books in the field. One hopes that the Architectural Press and the Editor will see fit to supply its present deficiencies.

Many Occasions. By W. B. HONEY. *Faber.* 18*s.*

In a previous book *Brought Out in Evidence*, which he published some years ago under a pseudonym, Mr. Honey showed himself an enthusiastic appreciator of many arts, and the present volume is a collection of his occasional pieces, which he has subtitled "Essays towards the appreciation of several arts." Perhaps the subtitle is a little pretentious for essays which do not pretend, in themselves, to originality or profundity. The longest essay, on English poetry, begins with some interesting remarks on the nature of poetry but soon becomes no more than a potted, and elementary, history of English poetry. The most important essay is on the "Arts in the Modern World," four broadcast talks, in which the subjects and the material of the modern artist are discussed and related to the society in which he works. The essay ends with a persuasive defence of the artist as visionary, for (to quote Mr. Honey) "the artist as mystic and visionary affirms the non-rational value of beauty, just as the saint affirms the value of goodness and self-sacrifice."

Mr. Honey's professional life has been spent in the Ceramics Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum, but he has only allowed himself to reprint two essays on this subject—and they are probably the best; a note of complete mastery is sounded, whereas in the others we are conscious of a mind which is somewhat earnestly dilettante.

Week-end Competitions

No. 1,022

Set by Norman MacKenzie

Assuming a football pool canvasser spoke Shakespearean verse, compose ten lines he might declaim to a prospective client. Entries by September 27th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,019

Set by G. de Vavasour

The usual prizes are offered for apocryphal first words (verbal precocity being assumed) of any three of the following: Columbus, Shakespeare, Blake, Goethe, Napoleon, Byron, Carlyle, Gladstone, Dostoevsky, Whistler, Picasso.

Report by G. de Vavasour

Invigorated by sea-breezes, or perhaps hungry for guineas, competitors, new and old, appeared in large numbers. But infancy, though reputed to be a time of innocence, is not one of delicacy; and for the sake of readers who have grown to be more delicate, if less innocent, many entries had to be suppressed. Style accounted for other rejections: the colloquialisms of the Kensington nursery fell uneasily from the lips of infant seer or statesman. Brenda Conisbee, Stanley Sharpless, H. A. C. Evans, Granville Garley, Towanbucket and A. C. D. are each awarded a guinea: a selection of single utterances is printed below.

Gladstone (to the doctor): My bag, sir, as I think.

Columbus: A whole nine months! Is there no shorter way?

Shakespeare: You might have used the best bed.

BRENDA CONISBEE

Blake: Can I have some angels in to play?

Napoleon: Be sure to keep my powder dry.

Gladstone: I am sorry, Nanny, to have been the cause of so many all-night sittings.

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